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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

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BY THE RIGHT HON. Anthony Eden M.C., M.P.

HARCOURT, BRACE AND COMPANY, NEW YORK

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first American edition

Typography by Robert Josephy

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
BY QUINN & BODEN COMPANY, INC., RAHWAY, N. J.

To B. E. from A. E.

In gratitude to a patient listener
to each one of these pages

The reports of the speeches delivered in the House of Commons and reprinted here are taken from the "Official Report" of Parliamentary Debates in the House of Commons.

I take this opportunity to express my thanks to the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office for permission to reproduce them, as also to print Command Paper No. 5134.

A. E.

P R E F A C E

THESE speeches have been put together without any changes being made in the form in which they were delivered. They suffer therefore from the defects of what is said for the moment and on the spur of the moment. They were delivered of course with no thought that they might ever be re-published, and my reluctance to agree that they should thus be collected in book form will therefore be understood.

But there is another side to the question, more important than any personal sentiment. These speeches are, with a few exceptions, a day to day record of political events in the international sphere. The greater part of them were delivered when I was Foreign Secretary and represent not only the personal views of the holder of that office, but, in the main, the considered views of the Government. They constitute, therefore, a faithful record of political developments in the earlier stages of a challenge which is showing its real character more clearly with every week that passes.

There has grown up of late a strange legend that the efforts of this country to improve relations with the powers of the Rome-Berlin Axis are of recent growth, that they constitute a departure from previous practice, and that this new era was only recently initiated. The pages of this book will show that there is no truth in this legend. The truth is that under successive governments and successive Foreign Secretaries the objective was always the same, by patient and persistent endeavour to promote international understanding, more especially between the great powers of Western Europe. If there

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is a criticism to be uttered, it is rather that even in those days we were perhaps too ready to accept professions of peaceful intentions at their face value.

It is true that in the period after the German re-occupation of the Rhineland, for instance, explanations and even contributions were asked for from Germany. No one, however, will be found today to condemn this policy on the ground that it was too harsh. It is interesting to reflect what might have been the consequence if those who were so loud in their indignant criticism of the alleged tactlessness of the Foreign Secretary of the day because he sought to discover the true meaning of certain expressions in the German Chancellor's declaration of March 1936, had devoted their great talents instead to an exhaustive study of *Mein Kampf*.

But if, with these speeches as background, we survey the broad trend of international affairs, there is one lesson which emerges clearly. In the years immediately following the Armistice, a world, in whose memory the blind cruelty of war was still acute, determined to set up an international order and by means of that order to seek to substitute methods of arbitration and conciliation for methods of force. No doubt the framers of the Covenant were moved by the conception of a great ideal, but no greater mistake could be made than to fail to appreciate the immediate practical problem that the League of Nations sought to resolve. The world is not static, and as a result of the development of communications and the manifold discoveries of science, it has become many times smaller than it was even in 1914. Our problem now closely resembles that which confronted individual countries in respect of their internal order centuries ago. The warring barons of mediaeval times virtually destroyed themselves on behalf of the rival houses of York and Lancas-

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ter. Exhausted, they had in the end to accept the rule of law of some authority greater than any one of them. So it is with the nations now. They must either accept and support the authority of some international order, or they will destroy each other utterly. There is no middle course. The greater power of modern weapons of warfare only serves to make the choice clearer and more menacing.

We live in a period of recurrent crises. In our efforts to deal with each in turn so that it shall not involve the world in universal catastrophe, we are apt to overlook the general trend of events, which is in itself the most disturbing feature of our own time. The British people are not ashamed to proclaim that they regard enduring peace as the greatest benefit that can be conferred upon mankind. Can there then be a more certain proof of man's folly, than that the whole economy of the world should now be distorted and the discoveries of science abused to perfect the methods of mutual slaughter? While this process continues, whether there are lulls in the storm or whether it quickens to a climax, there can be no lasting security. Search as we may, we have yet been unable to devise a half-way house between international anarchy and international order in the modern world. Slowly and painfully the task of rebuilding that order must be undertaken. It is the prayer of each one of us that the nations will yet turn their hands to this task, before universal conflict has laid our civilization in ruins. The task must be resumed one day. Can this yet be done before mankind has undergone further and unimaginable suffering?

The answer to this question does not, unhappily, rest with this country alone, and the omens, it must be confessed, are not auspicious. At best the world now enjoys no more than uneasy respites between successive acts of violence. Interna-

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tional standards are debased and international good faith derided. These pages are republished at this time in the hope that, despite their imperfections, they will serve to clarify the issue for us all.

Anthony Eden

*17 Fitzhardinge Street
5th April 1939*

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

A MAIDEN SPEECH ON AIR DEFENCE

Mr. Eden was first elected to Parliament as Conservative Member for Warwick and Leamington on 6th December 1923. On 22nd January 1924 Mr. Baldwin resigned and Mr. MacDonald formed his first Labour Ministry. Mr. Eden made his Maiden Speech in the House of Commons on 19th February 1924, in a Debate arising out of a resolution on Air Defence moved by Sir Samuel Hoare, which ran as follows:

“That this House, whilst earnestly desiring the further limitation of armaments so far as is consistent with the safety and integrity of the Empire, affirms the principle laid down by the late Government and accepted by the Imperial Conference that Great Britain must maintain a Home Defence Air Force of sufficient strength to give adequate protection against air attack by the strongest air force within striking distance of her shores.”

MAY I, at the outset, ask for the usual courtesy and indulgence which is always extended to a maiden speech. The last speaker [Mr. Wallhead] made great play of a little geographical tour, and he asked us from what quarter we expected an attack from the air. I do not know, but I do not think that is the point we want to discuss. Surely, the point is rather that we should prepare to defend ourselves against an attack from any quarter. There can be little doubt that this question is of exceptional interest in this House, and the reasons are not very far to seek. In the first place, it is not in the nature of things possible to provide hastily and

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at a moment's notice for air defence; and, in the second place, the very heart of our country, the city of London, is especially vulnerable to attack from the air. For these reasons, I hope that the Government will not be tempted too much by sentiment, and will rather act, as we gather from the speech of the Under-Secretary, not in accordance with his principles, but in accordance with the programme he has inherited from other parties, and that the Government will, as a matter of insurance, protect this country from the danger of attacks from the air.

The Under-Secretary [for Air, Mr. W. Leach] asked what was meant by adequate protection, and he said he believed preparedness was not a good weapon. That may be, but unpreparedness is a very much worse weapon, and it is a double-edged one, likely to hurt us very seriously. The Under-Secretary quoted an old military maxim, and I will quote one, which is that "Attack is the best possible form of defence." [HON. MEMBERS: "No, no!"] I expected honourable Members opposite would be a little surprised at that doctrine. I was not suggesting that we should drop our bombs on other countries, but simply that we should have the means at our disposal to answer any attack by an attack. It is a natural temptation to honourable Members opposite, some of whose views on defence were fairly well known during the years of the War, to adopt the attitude of that very useful animal the terrier, and roll on their backs and wave their paws in the air with a pathetic expression. But that is not the line on which we can hope to insure this country against attack from the air. I believe and hope that honourable Members opposite will carry out the programme which they have inherited, and will safeguard these shores, so far as they may, from the greatest peril of modern war.

CO-ORDINATION OF THE FIGHTING SERVICES

On 20th March 1924 Mr. Eden took part in a Debate on the Air Estimates in the House of Commons.

WE were not given very much information about the seconding of officers from the Army and Navy to the Air Force, and the information which we were given is not very encouraging. I think that nineteen officers from the Army and none from the Navy have been seconded this year. That is very disappointing in view of the very great importance which everyone attaches to this form of liaison. I would suggest that nothing should be left undone to ensure an adequate number of officers being seconded to the Air Force for the purposes of liaison. We all know the difficulties of that system and that neither the Admiralty nor the War Office is very fond of it. But at the same time I suggest that those difficulties are minor difficulties compared with the all-important necessity of securing a more vital co-ordination between the various arms of the Service. That is, I think, the point in which our national defence is weak. We have all to realize that in the next war co-ordination will be even more vital than it was in the last war, and unless I am mistaken it is the Air Force itself that will prove the pivot point in this co-ordination.

I would ask, further, whether the honourable Gentleman is considering extending the number of courses available for officers of the Army and Navy with the Air Force? Many Members of the Committee know that, towards the end of

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the War, some such courses were instituted, and were of the greatest value in enabling infantry officers to understand the scope and limitation of the work done by the Air Force. Therefore, I would suggest that those courses should be extended with this goal in view, to secure that every infantry officer should at some time or other have actual experience with the Air Force. Finally, I confess to some slight anxiety in listening to the last two speeches of the Under-Secretary of State for Air [Mr. Leach]. I had hoped to find him a very Cerberus in defence of his Estimates, and determined at all costs that they should not be touched or interfered with. I have seen nothing of that attitude, and my anxiety is this. We all know that development in this arm is becoming increasingly rapid. It was rapid during the War, and the Right Honourable Gentleman the Member for the Isle of Wight [Major-General Seely] told us how rapid it has been since, and he made our blood run cold. I hope that the Under-Secretary will, as far as he may, stiffen his back against the other Services when he finds himself in competition with them, and that the Government as a whole will show in this matter that they are alive to what, after all, is the most vital duty of any government—that is, to protect the lives and welfare of the citizens of the country over whose destinies they preside.

THE NEW TURKEY

On 1st April 1924 Mr. Eden spoke in the Debate in the House of Commons on the Second Reading of the Treaty of Peace (Turkey) Bill, to give effect to certain provisions of the Treaty of Lausanne, which was signed in July 1923 but was not yet ratified.

RISE to make one or two observations from the point of view of one who may claim some small first-hand knowledge of the country with which we are dealing. We have heard some criticism of this Bill this afternoon. We have been told of the things it fails to do and of safeguards which all of us would like to have seen included and which are not included, and I do not suppose there is any supporter of this Bill who would attempt to deny the force of that criticism. But I would suggest that, if we are clearly to judge of this Bill, that is the wrong attitude to take up. We should rather try to visualize the position in which our representatives were placed at this Conference. It is perfectly useless for honourable Members below the Gangway to make charges against our representatives for not fulfilling conditions, for not obtaining safeguarding guarantees at Lausanne that never could have been obtained without a resort to arms, which they would have been the first to condemn. The position since the Armistice has been that in all the treaties negotiated by the Right Honourable Member for Carnarvon Boroughs [Mr. Lloyd George] we were the victors. We could in a measure dictate our terms to the vanquished. Further—and very little reference has been made to this point—we were able to work, to a great extent, at any rate, in unity with our Allies.

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At Lausanne the tables were turned, and the position was reversed. In the eyes of the Turks we were the vanquished, not from a military point of view, but because, rightly or wrongly, they looked on this country as having sympathized with the aspirations of their enemies. Consequently, they claimed that the defeat of the Greeks was a moral defeat of this country also. Further, as we all know, there was very little unity among the Allies at Lausanne. We had to deal, not with a vanquished enemy, but with the representatives of a nation fresh from a great victory, proud, and justly proud, of the achievements of their armies, and knowing full well that they could only obtain the approval of their countrymen by securing terms which would redound to the credit of their country. I suggest that under those conditions—and that is a true *précis* of the conditions—it is a matter of the greatest congratulation to our representatives that an agreement of any kind was arrived at, and it is a great tribute to the patience, the tact, the zeal, and the understanding of our representatives at Lausanne.

It is urged that there is not sufficient protection for Christian minorities within the Turkish Dominions in this Bill. That is a very fair criticism, but we know full well that our representatives fought hard to obtain those guarantees. They were not supported, however, and consequently were not successful. Another point is important in arriving at a conclusion on this point. What has been the experience of history in these matters of minorities? Have we not over and over again obtained in treaties with Turkish guarantees for for the protection of Christian minorities, guarantees which were then deemed adequate, and has there ever been an occasion on which those guarantees have been of the slightest use in defending those minorities? Not one. It is possible

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to exaggerate the value of those guarantees. We are far more likely to be able to assist those unfortunate minorities by acting as the friends of the Turkish nation on the basis of this Treaty than by producing clauses which would only have been granted, if granted at all, resentfully and in a spirit of bitterness. The Turkish people have ever been resentful, and are resentful today, of any attempt by any other country to claim a prescriptive right over any portion of their citizens. We are far more likely to achieve protection for these people by friendly negotiation than by insistence on clauses in the Treaty.

In conclusion, I should like to say just a few words about the existing conditions in Turkey. I do not suppose that there is anyone who knows that country, or has studied its history, who does not feel great anxiety about the existing conditions there. It is difficult to know whither events are hurrying the Turkish people. They are passing through a period of ultra-nationalism, and it is not to be wondered at that that phase should have come upon them. The Turkish people have always had a strong sentiment of nationality, which has sometimes been overlooked by historians who are apt to exaggerate their religious zeal. At the end of the War the Turkish people found themselves in the greatest danger for their national life. They felt paralysing strangleholds upon their future existence as a nation. Is it to be wondered at that they made a supreme national effort to free themselves, and, that effort having been successful, is it to be wondered at that nationalism reigns in Turkey at this hour? It was nationalism that saved Turkey; it is nationalism that rules Turkey today. I believe that as time goes on other influences will prevail, and that a spirit of toleration will make itself felt, and then this country, on the basis of this Treaty,

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will be able to step in and share in the better relations between the two countries. I believe that it is our duty to foster and build upon such friendship as exists between this country and Turkey today. That friendship, I believe, is very much greater than some people seem prepared to admit. This Treaty, whatever its merits or demerits may be, has brought to an end an era, full, if you will, of doubts and anxieties for the future, but also, I believe, rich in promise of great and increased happiness to come, of more widely and more usefully developed friendly relations between this country and Turkey.

THE IRAQ FRONTIER

In October 1924 the Labour Government was defeated in the General Election and Mr. Baldwin formed his second Conservative Ministry. On 21st December 1925 Mr. Eden spoke in the House of Commons on the Prime Minister's motion "That this house approves the action taken by the representatives of His Majesty's Government at Geneva in accepting the award of the Council of the League of Nations on the Iraq boundary."

IT is not for nothing that the countries of the Middle East were once the cradle of the human race. Many centuries before this island emerged from a state of barbarism rulers and statesmen were confronted with problems of race and religion, of pride and prejudice, in those lands which we now call Iraq. It is all the more important that, as in the speech of the Right Honourable Gentleman who has just sat down [Mr. Runciman], we should be able this evening to make suggestions and criticisms that shall be both constructive and helpful. Nothing could be more unfortunate than that we should bring into debates on this none too simple topic any of the controversy which is raised in journalism outside.

There are really two separate decisions which the House has to consider this afternoon, essentially separate, although the League of Nations has made them contingent for reasons into which we need not enter now. Those decisions are the fixing, in the first place, of Iraq's northern boundary and the extension in the second place, of the maximum period of our mandatory responsibility. With regard to the

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first decision there can be no question, and it is no exaggeration to say, that the fixing of a boundary somewhere in the neighbourhood of the Brussels Line was vital to Iraq. It is much more than a question of a few square miles of territory, however valuable, being transferred from one government to another. Briefly put, it means the changing of a short, easily defensible mountain boundary into a long non-strategic boundary, incapable of defence, even by an army many times larger than Iraq can ever afford. In other words, to have conceded any considerable portion of territory in the old Mosul Vilayet, which is now part of Iraq, would have made Iraq's national existence strategically a contradiction in terms. For Iraq it is a question of vital importance. For Turkey the possession of Mosul or even of the whole of the old Mosul Vilayet is not a question of vital importance. It is not even a question of importance at all. I do not believe that the Turkish Republic today would add anything to its strength by the possession of any section of this territory, and I believe the wiser heads among the Turkish people realize and appreciate that. The only service which it could render Turkey would be to give that Republic a weapon over Iraq, and that is a purpose which neither the League of Nations nor any other people or government are anxious to encourage.

The second decision is that of which there has been some criticism, namely, the extension of the maximum period of our Mandate. That criticism is, I suppose, based on the assumption that had this new maximum period not been established we should have been able to cut short our obligations in the year 1928. Our responsibilities would—I presume that is the contention—have been finished and closed. So far as I know, there is no responsible public opin-

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ion, no section of opinion in Iraq or anywhere else, that believes that Iraq had any chance of securely establishing herself by 1928. That really is the gist of the position. The fact that everything was uncertain after 1928 was a brake on Iraq's progress. The country needs capital, foreign initiative, and development from abroad. It may even need increased population from abroad. It can get none of those things until there is political security, and—it may sound a paradox, but it is none the less true—the very extension of the maximum period of our mandate is the best instrument we could have of the likelihood for an early curtailment of our responsibilities.

It is the same on the financial side. More revenue is needed by the Government of Iraq. The country is being taxed today . . . as far as a newly established country can bear taxation. New sources of revenue will only be opened up as capital is encouraged to come to the country by the security of Government. I would suggest to the House, that though, for my part, I do not deny how very strong are the reasons against our remaining for any long period in Iraq, how urgent are the reasons for curtailing our commitments there, nearly all the reasons brought forward are reasons which would have been equally operative against our ever going to Iraq at all. I admit that the past history of our dealing in Iraq is not perhaps altogether fortunate. To a large extent we were forced by circumstances. We were trampled under foot by the march of events, but we are in this position, and it is the present and the future which we have to discuss, and not the past. There can be no question either . . . of our obligation to the people of that country. The Right Honourable Member for Carnarvon Boroughs [Mr. Lloyd George] speaking in this House, made that point

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abundantly clear. In 1923 he stated that "The intention . . . was not merely to conquer Mesopotamia and hand it over to the Arabs, but to conquer Mesopotamia, found an Arab State, and uphold it by British support." Again, he said later: "The obligation to the Arabs was an obligation to found a State for them, and to uphold it." [Official Report, vol. 161, 20th March 1923, cols. 2453 and 2454.]

I would remind the House—and I do not want to overstate the argument of prestige; it is a dangerous argument, and can be easily overstated—that although we might perhaps be able to leave Iraq under normal circumstances, having discharged our obligations, without any serious loss of prestige, I do say that no words, however strong, could exaggerate the harm which we should do to our reputation not only in Iraq, but throughout the East, if we were now to scuttle, like flying curs, at the sight of our own shadow. Honourable Members know that if we pursued a course like that our name would be a jibe in the mouth of every tavern-lounger from Marakesh to Singapore. It might take centuries to recover our prestige. The East is a land of memory. I have read somewhere, though I cannot remember where, an Eastern saying somewhat to this effect: that bravery consists of ten parts, and that one part consists in running away, and the other nine consist in never coming in sight of the enemy. Excellent though that definition may be, we do not want our name in the East associated with it.

One criticism I would respectfully address to my Right Honourable Friend. I am not myself enamoured of Western forms of government in Eastern lands. I have always been a little sceptical of the wisdom of trying to set up democratic institutions in Eastern countries. With us, democracy, whatever its merits or demerits may be, is at least a plant of nat-

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ural growth. In the East it is a forced growth, an importation, and foreign to the soil. Consequently, it needs many years more to develop and many years more to grow to be understood by the people. We have asked a great deal of Iraq. We have asked her to do what, I believe, even a Western nation in their position could not have done, and in fairness, and in fulfilment of our obligation to the people, we must give to Iraq a full time to adapt herself to our democratic peculiarities. We have placed the country with its forelegs in one civilization and its hind legs in another. We have extricated it from one form of civilization, which is not, perhaps, very exalted, but, at least, we are surely bound to replace it with another form of civilization which shall be stable.

I will only ask those honourable Members who are still critical of the Government's decision, to visualize for one instant what would happen if we were to adopt a policy of scuttle in Iraq. The State of Iraq cannot hope to stand by itself. There would be raids by neighbouring Arab tribes. Before very long the Turkish flag would fly once again over the capital of the Caliphs. All the blood which had been spilt, all the money which had been spent, would have been in vain. The country would sink back once more into a state of apathy, eventually breeding death and despair. And, then, I would ask honourable Members on those benches, what of the Christian minority? So long in our history books have we read of the efforts made by the great Liberal Party in the past, the party of which honourable Members on those benches are the worthy, if exiguous, remnants! So often have we heard of the efforts they have made to secure toleration and freedom from persecution for minorities within the Turkish Empire! How many speeches have been made in

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the past in that cause? How many seats have been won by the Liberal Party? How many Liberal majorities have been returned to this House on a wave of popular indignation? And those minorities were not under British rule, but were within the Turkish Empire. The minorities of Iraq are Christian minorities for whom we have a direct responsibility. Honourable Members opposite know as well as I what would happen if we were to leave them to their fate. Are we to leave those minorities to the fate which must inevitably be theirs? . . .

I will only say one word with reference to our relations with the Turkish Government. I have been accused in the past of being pro-Turk. I do not exactly know what that means, but if it means that I am anxious that this country should have friendly relations with Turkey, then I have no objection whatever to the name. I am not and never have been in favour of a bag-and-baggage policy. I can see no reason why Turkey should not have territory in Europe that is not operative against the British nation having territory in Asia, and I would only say this to the Government, that I hope, while rightly they stand fast by their bond with Iraq, they will at the same time—as the Prime Minister has already indicated that he will—extend the hand of friendship and conciliation to Turkey. If I might, I would respectfully suggest to him that, perhaps, it would not be amiss at this stage that we should send some diplomatic representative of really high standing not to Constantinople but to Angora.

I am convinced a gesture of that kind would have real effect with the Turks, and I will only say in conclusion that, as far as I am aware, there are only two forces which are now encouraging the Turkish people to adopt more foolish

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courses. One of those is the agents of the Bolshevik Government of Russia and the other—I have no doubt from different motives—is a section of our own Press.

That is, indeed, an unholy alliance, a marriage bed upon which even the most hardened of us must blush to look, and we may well wonder how far this alliance is to go. Are we to see Bolsheviks perusing the columns of the *Daily Express* and Noble Lords bustling to Fleet Street in Russian boots? In any event, I think this House should assure our Turkish friends, should they need the assurance, which I hope they do not, that this Press in no sense represents the public opinion of this country. The hand may be the hand of Esau, but the voice is quite undoubtedly the voice of Jacob, and I would suggest that should—as I do not believe will happen—our relations with Turkey in the near future in any sense go awry, then the responsibility must rest, in a very large measure, upon those organs of the Press which have been carrying out so unscrupulous a propaganda. There are some sacrifices which cannot in honour be made even upon the altar of circulation. I trust that the Government will, as the outcome of the declaration of the Prime Minister this afternoon, extend a hand of friendship to Turkey so that we may in the years to come, as in the past, live in a spirit of amity, mutual respect, and goodwill with the Turkish Republic. We desire nothing else. Let mischief makers remain away. It is in that hope that I ask the House to give a unanimous approval to the Resolution of the Government.

ANGLO-FRENCH AMITY

During 1928 the Anglo-French naval agreement met with strong criticism, the Labour and Liberal parties declaring that it raised suspicions in Germany and Italy and would estrange America. In November Mr. Lloyd George moved an amendment denouncing the Agreement. Mr. Eden defended the Government in the House of Commons on 13th November.

THERE seems a tendency to cast suspicion upon the present relations of this country and France, as though the friendship which existed between us cloaked some hidden and sinister motive. No one will endorse that. At the moment I suppose our relations with France are very friendly indeed and, personally, I hope they will always continue to be so, because I am certain that these relations form an inevitable basis for the peace of Europe not only today but in the future. After all, we have only to look back on recent events to realize that the friendship is in no sense exclusive. On the contrary, it is the medium through which alone such progress as has been made in international relations has been achieved. Through that medium the agreements of Locarno were achieved, and rapprochement with Germany made possible. It was through that friendship that Germany was able to find a place in the Council of the League of Nations itself, and but for the friendly relations which existed between this country and France the League of Nations would not now be in the strong position it is at the moment; and that in itself has been the instrument which has paved the way for the settlement of difficult problems.

ANGLO-FRENCH AMITY

I am convinced that it must be an essential factor in future international relations in Europe that this country and France shall maintain and extend to others the friendship which has bound them together in the past. Surely, it would be a morbid and monstrous doctrine to lay it down that two such countries as France and England, which are bound together in their friendship by every tie which should sanctify it, cannot continue to use for their mutual benefit and the benefit of the rest of mankind that measure of friendship without in some ambiguous way embittering other nations, or rousing suspicion in other governments. I do not believe that any foreign government entertains such suspicion for a moment, and if anyone wished for proof of the importance of Anglo-French amity they have only to glance over the history of international relations since the War. On every occasion when the outlook for peace in Europe has been the least happy they have been the occasions when our relations with France have been the least happy.

THE ESSENTIALS OF PEACE

When the National Government first came to power in August 1931 Mr. Eden was appointed Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, serving first under Lord Reading and subsequently under Sir John Simon. The three main issues in the international field at this time were Manchuria, Disarmament, and Reparations. In a speech at the Rhodes Trust dinner on 17th June 1932 Mr. Eden discussed the task of creating and keeping international understanding.

NO apology is, I think, needed if for a few moments tonight you and I seek to probe some of those problems of international relationships which today beset us all. Nobody could certainly be better fitted to consider them than those gathered in this hall tonight. The vision of your founder, the tradition of the Trust, the need of the hour, not only invite us but command us to consider international relations in the coming years. Whatever our grudge against the world in which we live today, no one can dub it dull—no one can complain that you or I are “stretched on the rack of a too easy chair.” It is rather a fault of the present day that so immediate is the pressure of business, so compelling the successive crises crowding upon us from all corners of the earth, that we have all too little leisure to consider the wider aspects of world politics.

A word first on the foreign policy of the British Empire. There is in this country a school of thought whose conception of British Imperialism is that we should concentrate upon the problems that are especially our own and that we

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should ignore and even repress every inclination to take our part in the troubles of others. We should, I think, beware of the lure of this appeal. However attractive at first sight, such a conception is not wise politics. There can be nothing exclusive in modern British Imperialism. There is no room in this world for isolationists. Even if we would indulge such selfishness, we cannot. Our contacts are too close. The world is too intimately interdependent. If anyone doubted that heretofore, the events of the present economic crisis should be enough to convince the most obdurate. For after all, what is the excessive indulgence in tariffs but another form of the same exclusiveness, and no one will doubt the responsibility that indulgence in fiscal isolation has to bear for our present difficulties. The conclusion, then, is that any attempt at isolation in these times is not only unworthy but unwise. If the ship goes down it is small consolation that we have securely barricaded the state cabin, if, by a more intelligent direction of our energies we could have saved the ship itself.

This, then, is the first assumption—that each nation has its part to play in present-day international affairs. Without arrogance may we not say that the countries of the world that you represent tonight have in this a special responsibility, and a special part to play? The growth of democracy has brought with it a greater measure of public interest in foreign affairs. Yet I fear that it would be true to say that interest is, on the whole, less active and less well informed amongst English-speaking peoples than in some other countries. This is, no doubt, the heritage of our island ancestry. It is unquestionably true that there never was a time when an intelligent study of international relations was more necessary than today. It seems to me that I discern one or

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two disquieting features in the history of the last few years. The improvement in European relations, for instance, that we hoped to see after Locarno has not fructified. On the contrary, the upward curve was checked within two or three years of that event. Is there any reason for this? I think one is this: of late, sincere seekers after peace have sometimes been neglectful of essentials. While one-half of Europe has been dominated by apprehension and the other by impatience, there has been the tendency to pay too much attention to the mechanics of peace and too little to its fundamentals. There is no real substitute for understanding, and when nations drift apart it is of little use to construct elaborate machinery for which there is no immediate call. Indeed, that machinery may even get in the way. You cannot make peace by machinery. In the last resort it is the spirit and not the mechanics that count, and, as I have watched some of these ingenious contrivances which have occupied the minds of international statesmen for too long while the more sinister spirits of a selfish nationalism and an outworn jingoism were gaining influence in the background, I have been made sad by their futility. As well use a mousetrap to catch a goblin.

The first task then which falls more particularly to you of the post-war generation is this creation of international understanding and this concentration of the public mind throughout the world upon the essentials of peace. In this none can play a greater role than you. Our friends from the United States and from Germany can play their part as their predecessors have done. I know that they will. Perhaps an especial opportunity, however, opens out before the citizens of the British Dominions overseas. The Great War brought about a fundamental and rapid change in the international

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status of the self-governing Dominions. The process has been in operation ever since, until today the Dominions stand a group of nations with complete equality and autonomy as regards their relations with foreign Powers, bound together by common unity under the Crown. A greater opportunity lies there and a greater influence could still be wielded. That influence has already proved, as I believe, helpful to the world. History will not neglect the part played by the Imperial Conference of 1921, in the Washington Disarmament Conference, nor the work of the Imperial Conference of 1923 on the problem of reparations. It was, I think, Sir William Clark, United Kingdom High Commissioner in Canada, who truly remarked in this connection, shortly after his arrival in Canada in 1928: "it is no longer one note to be struck, but a full chord." This development has other advantages. It gives increased opportunities to the statesmen of the various countries of the British Commonwealth of Nations to meet and so to develop their knowledge of one another, and, at the meetings of the League of Nations and other international conferences, to widen their knowledge by first-hand contact with the world outside. No less, I believe, can the British Empire contribute to the peace and welfare of the world by illustrating by their own example the possibility of arriving, by discussion, at an agreed solution.

Each one of us in this hall has certain ideals in common. We all of us hope that we are free from nationalism in its narrowest sense, but possessed of nationalism in its broadest sense: a determination to understand the other fellow's point of view. If we can translate that ideal into international politics, the problems that so baffle us today will disappear. That is the task in which each one of you can play so great

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a part. The vision and the generosity of your founder have created an opportunity which I only wish the world could share. But you, who have been chosen for your leadership among your generation, can play your part as he would have had you play it, and, believe me, more than ever in these times the world has need of you.

RECONCILIATION AND THE NEW REICH

The Disarmament Conference met at Geneva in February 1932 and continued its labours throughout that year. Mr. Eden first became associated with the work of the Conference as a Substitute Delegate in December.

At the end of 1932 the Persian Government cancelled the Anglo-Persian Oil Company's concession. The British Government took the dispute to the League and a satisfactory settlement was reached in 1933.

In February 1933 Japan was declared by the League to be the aggressor in Manchuria.

By March 1933 the Nazi Party had gained control in Germany and Herr Hitler was Chancellor of the Reich. In the autumn of that year Germany withdrew from the Disarmament Conference and resigned from the League of Nations. At a meeting of the League of Nations Union held in Birmingham Town Hall on 11th November 1933, Mr. Eden was one of the speakers.

CIRCUMSTANCES combine to make this anniversary memorable. Fifteen years have elapsed, years packed with events, stimulating and depressing, encouraging and minatory. Probably in no like period of human history has there been so much endeavour to prevent a recurrence of war. Strenuous and enduring efforts have been directed to the organization of peace, men have dedicated their lives in its service, organizations like the League of Nations Union in this country have striven by inspiration and instruction

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to uphold and expound the machinery that statesmen have set up. Yet all is not well. Why is this?

Moreover, and this is a disquieting feature, the generation that knew war, that hated it from intimate knowledge of its blind wastefulness and senseless cruelty, is passing away. There are many of us in this hall tonight whose experience of the War years was not that of grown men and women. Even for those who had that experience human memory is merciful. The most cruel memories, sharp because they are cruel, become blunted, sufferings grow dim, and an ever-deepening haze of years at length cloaks tragedy in oblivion.

There is danger in this. For what man ceases to fear acutely, he ceases to guard against actively. In the immediately post-War years the world's dominating determination was to ensure that the catastrophe should not be retold. Something of that momentum has perhaps been lost. No nation, I pray, wants war; but the peoples are no longer so positive of the pacific intentions of each other. Doubting glances are flung across frontiers. The questioning of the motives of neighbours has begun.

This is an atmosphere which, while in itself in no sense justifying alarm, is none the less a breeding-ground for suspicions, themselves no friends of peace.

In these conditions, what must we do?

First, keep cool, in judgement and in statement. While it would be careless to ignore the influences that cause uneasiness, it is foolish to exaggerate them. Let us face the facts, not embellish them. Scaremongers are the satellites of war. Second, we must strive to stand back ourselves from a mass of detail that obscures our vision, and seek to distinguish the essential from the superficial. Thirdly, we must then decide what are the policies and the machinery that

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will best ensure the maintenance of peace. Finally, we must determine how in this country we can best uphold these, that we may ensure their ultimate triumph. For difficulties are no excuse for despair, they must be an incentive to endeavour.

If we candidly survey these post-War years, they seem to fall naturally into three periods; the period of treaty-making, next the period of consolidation, finally the period of falling back, with here and there disturbing evidence of the re-emergence of the old Adam.

If this analysis is correct, how is the present situation to be met? At the close of the War the nations, dissatisfied with the methods for the conduct of international affairs, which had culminated in 1914, determined to attempt some other method, better calculated as they believed, to express a world determination for peace. That new method was the policy of consultation. They determined to seek to make it effective by means of personal contacts regularly exchanged between statesmen of all countries, by means of machinery that would make possible the joint or collective settlement of international differences. That machinery was the League of Nations.

Our first question then is, is that method, is that machinery wrong, should we scrap them and try others? My answer to that question, after considering it as deeply and dispassionately as I can, is, "No, a thousand times no." What is wrong, I am convinced, is neither the method nor the machinery but the use that is made of them. It is even possible that in recent years we have concentrated too much upon machinery, have spent too large a part of our time in perfecting it without appreciating to the full the greater sig-

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nificance of the willingness of nations to employ it. The best machinery is but lumber if it be not used.

Let us be frank in these matters. I date the deterioration of international relations in Europe—with the problems of other continents, though they have in some instances an important influence, I will not deal tonight—from the death of Herr Stresemann. There followed, I fear, inevitably, the growth of doubts in France, a drifting apart of the two nations France and Germany, which has continued and which our efforts have been unable to arrest. Nor must we lose sight of the unhappy influence of the period of intense economic depression upon international relations. It brought deep anxiety in its train, amounting sometimes almost to despair.

It is profitless to allocate blame, but it is idle to deny that the events in Germany this year have created uneasiness, even anxiety, in many quarters. They have had their reaction upon the work of the Disarmament Conference. It may be urged in reply that there is no justification for such a reaction; even so, there is no doubt of its reality.

The first stage towards a recovery of confidence in Europe is a removal of the causes of uneasiness. We have all of us been glad to read in recent weeks the repeated declarations by the German Chancellor and by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the peaceful intention of the government of the Reich. We welcome such declarations cordially and sincerely. We must be fair. We all know that in effect Germany has been through a revolutionary movement in the past year, and allowances must be made for revolutions. The English people are, I am confident, ready to make them. Yet I should be less than frank if I did not add that there are disturbing evidences the removal of which would do

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more to reassure us than any number of the most pacific speeches.

It is impossible to ignore the clearest evidence, and you will have noted, I am sure, with the greatest regret, a growing tendency upon the part of Germany to draw herself away from other nations, to retire within herself. We deplore it, and even though Germany may convince herself that she is the aggrieved party, such a conviction may explain but scarcely seems to us to justify what has occurred.

This country's first aim in foreign policy is and must always be the maintenance of world peace. It is dictated by our geographical position. We have no territorial or other selfish ambitions upon the continent of Europe or elsewhere. What we desire is a state of assured peace in which the world would be enriched by the exchange and enjoyment of its wealth. We know that we must suffer by the embitterment and impoverishment of our customers. Even from the lowest motives, therefore, peace must be our objective, since we are a nation of traders and world peace is indispensable to the free flow of world trade. The policy of the British Government has, therefore, for years past been one of promoting the process of reconciliation upon the continent of Europe. That is the policy of the Government today. At all times we shall be ready to do what lies in our power to ensure the settlement of differences in a reasonable spirit of mutual accommodation. The task is not a light one. Let us be under no illusions about that. We must therefore be ready at all times to use the ways and means which seem best fitted for the occasion. We should, I think, allow our government some latitude as to these.

In this connection I know that there has been some criticism of late on the subject of secret diplomacy. That is a

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phrase which was coined to express a system of secret and semi-secret treaties and alliances, of which there were a number in Europe before 1914. This was a bad system. It is essential that the people of this country should know to the full their commitments, and of course in these days they do know them. It is now the practice that every treaty which is concluded by this country is laid before Parliament and is also registered and published by the League of Nations in accordance with Article 18 of the Covenant. But secret treaties and commitments must not be confused with private negotiations. When we seek to secure agreement upon any subject in private life, whether commercial, financial, or merely personal, there is always a phase of private negotiation or informal conversation; and so with international relations, which are governed by just the same rules, and subject to just the same limitations. If you have settled a dispute with a contumacious relative, you are usually content to register the fact to the family circle without describing the process. And so with international relations. I think it may safely be maintained that no negotiations in public or in private life are ever successfully concluded without private conversations. . . .

There is perhaps a special responsibility and a special opportunity for those of us who belong to the generation who served in the late War and who are still of military age. The present-day leaders in Germany belong, many of them, to that generation. It is not only that we who have seen war are the last to wish it to recur, but it is that with the individual experience we have each of us had we appreciate only too clearly that a future war must begin where the last war closed. If the Great War was a struggle in man-power,

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the next war would be a test of the endurance of the civil population. Which one of us in any country would wish to translate into the homes of our people the experience that we knew in the last War. Surely it should not be impossible, more especially for those of us who were combatants, to overstep the barriers of suspicion and misunderstanding. If we are to do this, it must be before they grow too formidable.

In the survey which I have given to you tonight you and I have tried to look beneath the surface to the realities of our problems. If we have been successful you will appreciate, I know, the stern reality of the difficulties that confront us. They are indeed formidable, but they are not, I am convinced, insuperable. One can only trust that in their attempts to solve them there may be given to the leaders of all nations in fullest measure vision, courage, and generosity.

THE MEMORANDUM ON DISARMAMENT

On 1st January 1934 Mr. Eden was appointed Lord Privy Seal. At the end of the same month the British Government published its memorandum on Disarmament, which urged that the best course to pursue was to reach agreement in a convention on the abandonment of certain classes of weapons by the most heavily armed Powers. Mr. Eden left for Paris, Berlin, and Rome in February with a view to ascertaining the respective reactions of the French, German, and Italian Governments to the Memorandum. Mr. Eden addressed his constituents on the situation at a meeting at Kenilworth on 28th June 1934.

THE fact that after more than two years of effort the Disarmament Conference should so far have failed to reach any agreement upon a Convention must be disappointing to us all, and to none more so than those who have been concerned with the work of the Conference. We should, however, I am convinced, be wrong to allow ourselves to despair on this account. One setback does not spell disaster and the work for international co-operation must continue, if only because on this small earth's surface we have got to live together and we cannot live together in any comfort otherwise.

I have seen it suggested that, if the Disarmament Conference fails, we should ourselves disarm, whatever other nations do. That is not a practical policy, nor one calculated to promote world peace. Indeed, I think it would be the height of folly for any British government to pursue such a

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course. We have ourselves disarmed to the edge of risk already in the hope that by so doing we should make international agreement upon a lower level of armaments easier of attainment. That hope has so far been disappointed. As the First Lord of the Admiralty has told you, the trend of the armaments of many other nations has been upward, while ours has been downward. To suggest that we should disarm altogether while other nations are rearming may make a quixotic appeal to some who have no responsibility for national defence; but no government could pursue such a policy and remain true to its trust, since for this country to disarm alone while the world rearms would be not to promote world peace but to invite disaster. . . .

BRITISH LINKS WITH SWEDEN

In the autumn of 1934 Mr. Eden accepted invitations from the Scandinavian Governments to visit Stockholm, Oslo, and Copenhagen. On 15th October he delivered an address on Anglo-Swedish relations at Stockholm.

LET me first seek to express my deep sense of gratitude both for the invitation of the Swedish Government and for the welcome which you, Mr. Sandler, and your colleagues have so generously extended to me. His Majesty's Government were sincerely glad of the opportunity thus afforded for a further and informal meeting between ministers of the two governments whose aims and policies have so much in common. For me personally it is especially agreeable to be present as Mr. Sandler's guest tonight. This invitation has indeed added one more to the many examples of our host's friendship during the period in which we have had to work together, a friendship which I can assure you that I and my colleagues value highly.

I am betraying no secret when I tell you that the Foreign Minister of Sweden has by his courage and his integrity at Geneva won for himself an especial position. This was well exemplified by his unanimous election as President of the Assembly this year. I am glad to have this opportunity to pay my tribute to the work which Mr. Sandler is doing for peace and understanding among the nations, and to pay it here upon Mr. Sandler's native Swedish soil.

Mr. Sandler has made a reference to commercial relations

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between our two countries. These are, I am happy to think, mutually satisfactory. In a world where international commerce has been steadily shrinking it is good to note the increasing flow of trade between Sweden and Great Britain. This is no doubt largely due to the Trade Agreement of 1933, which has worked well. We all of us hope for a further steady increase in trade between our two countries in the years to come.

But as Mr. Sandler has said, the links between our two countries are not only commercial. Despite the fact that we are so far separated geographically our two peoples have much in common. No one who reads the history of our two countries can fail to note the close parallel in every stage of their development. What Engelbrekt was for you Simon de Montfort was for us. There is a striking resemblance between the reign of Gustavus Vasa in Sweden and that of Queen Elizabeth in England. Even the weaknesses of our rulers have a kinship. The failings of your talented Erik XIV bear a marked resemblance to those of Richard II a century or more before. Again, your Gustavus III was a more brilliant George III. In both countries the early eighteenth century marked a period of transition from personal rule by the monarch to collective government responsibility through parliament.

In the eighteenth century, when political despotism prevailed in continental Europe, Sweden and Britain were, I think, the only countries where the government acted in co-operation with the representatives of the people. In both countries a faith in popular representation has struck roots so deep down into the national consciousness that they have grown in strength whatever the varying fortunes of history. The British people are proud and justly proud of their

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ancient institutions, sanctioned as they have been by time and by the nation's devotion to them. They are proud also of their personal freedom and of their sense of order and responsibility. Are not these characteristics of the Swedish people also?

There is one further remarkable feature in the relations between our two countries. Both nations have carried their arms over great parts of the European continent, but though there was once a formal declaration of war they have never come to blows with one another. . . .

But the strongest bonds of all that unite us are our joint interest in international peace and individual liberty. The British people's love of peace is deep and sincere. It would no doubt be easy to find selfish reasons for this. We are a nation of traders and trade needs peace, but the sentiment is deeper than that. It is strong in every section of our people, and by no means least so among those who have seen war at first hand, who know its blind cruelty, its reckless devastation, the insensate waste and misery that are its consequence.

The overwhelming majority of the people of Great Britain support the League of Nations. As an instrument it is no doubt far from perfect; most man-made instruments are imperfect. Almost the only modern exception I know is your Town Hall. But the League exists to meet a real need. Science in recent years has conferred many blessings upon humanity but these in their turn have entailed some consequences not in all respects so happy. The world has become smaller. Foreign relationships have become intensified and the League is indispensable for their smooth adjustment.

It used to be said in my country, "Happy the nation that

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has no history." No one can say that of Britain or of Sweden, but we might paraphrase it in this way, "Happy the countries whose respective Foreign Office files are empty." There is indeed fortunately no shadow of a political difference between us. On the contrary I am confident that the opportunities for collaboration between Great Britain and Sweden in the future, as in the past, will be many and that we shall both work together in the future as in the past for the cause which we have so much at heart, peace in the world and understanding among the nations.

And so, Mr. Sandler, ladies and gentlemen, looking back and forward, most sincerely do I thank you.

IDEALS, REALITIES AND ARMS

Mr. Eden, though anxious to secure an arms agreement, was at all times a convinced opponent of unilateral disarmament, and in several public speeches showed his concern at the state of our own national defence. It was the burden of his address to the Stratford-on-Avon Brotherhood on 11th November 1934.

ONE of the most important of the recent activities of the League of Nations has been the promotion of the Disarmament Conference. There are two schools of thought among those who support the principle of disarmament. There are first those who believe in unilateral disarmament, that is to say, those who think that Great Britain should disarm irrespective of what other nations do. Secondly, there are those who hold that any scheme of disarmament, to be effective, must be general in character, and must be embodied in a convention which is accepted by all, or almost all, the nations of the world. I have never believed in unilateral disarmament. An unarmed Britain in an armed world would not only place Britain in a highly dangerous position, but would deprive British representatives of much of their negotiating power and authority in the councils of the nations. Such signal weakness would constitute a temptation to the predatory instincts of others. The armaments of this country must be directly related to the armaments of other countries, and we can never be indifferent to the policies in this respect which are being pursued by other nations, whether in Europe or elsewhere. On the other hand, the principle of all-round disarmament has none of these dis-

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advantages, and it has throughout been the view of the National Government, and is so still today, that the signature of a general disarmament convention would reduce the chance of war and bring a sense of security to a distracted world. For this reason, whatever measures may meanwhile be found necessary to safeguard our position until such time as a full agreement among the nations can be reached, our ultimate aim is surely still to strive for as wide a measure as can be obtained of general disarmament.

There is one factor in the present world situation which we must not overlook. All nations today have not the same outlook as we in these matters in respect either of the League or of disarmament. It is idle to pretend that they have; and it is dangerous to attribute to others the same outlook as ourselves if in fact they are far from sharing it.

We all of us in this country believe in a collective peace system. We want to make it effective. Is it not inevitable that in order to do so the armaments of the Powers who believe in such a system should be regulated by realities? All the nations of the world are not at present members of the League of Nations. Some powerful States are outside the League or, more serious still, have recently given notice of their withdrawal. We cannot, therefore, count upon these nations for active co-operation in any attempt to work the collective system. Is it suggested that the arms of those nations who believe in disarmament and a collective system should be drastically reduced, while nations unwilling to undertake such obligations arm as much and as fast as they like? If so, what chance is there of those who believe in a collective system being able to make such a system effective, and what is such a system but a snare and a delusion if it be not effective? We must have regard to reality, and while

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not relinquishing the pursuit of our ideal we must pay heed to realities, even if they are unwelcome. To ignore them is to invite disaster. It is the task of practical statesmanship to distinguish what is possible from what is desirable. By achieving the former we draw nearer to the latter.

I yield to no one in my firm belief that this country should continue to pursue its efforts to seek to arrive by international agreement at a convention for the limitation and reduction of armaments. This must still be our goal, we must continue to strive for it unremittingly. I am no less convinced that we render no service to the cause of world peace at this time if we allow our country to be unduly weak in its defences during the period that must elapse before such a convention can be negotiated. When political conditions in Europe are disturbed, a strong Britain is a stabilizing element, a weak Britain may be an invitation to conflict. I am not an alarmist about the future of Europe. I do not believe in the imminence of war. But no man can deny the difficulties and dangers of the present time, and no one who has knowledge of the current of opinion on the continent of Europe, and indeed elsewhere in the world at this time, can doubt of their reality. If Britain is to play her part as you would have her do in preserving world peace, she cannot do so by prating isolation nor by a denial of her responsibilities. Those responsibilities must be shouldered, and while supporting the League of Nations, while working for a disarmament convention, while seeking to strengthen the collective peace system, we cannot in the interval ignore the needs of our own defence, the strength or weakness of which may one day have formidable consequences for the peace of the world.

AN INTERNATIONAL FORCE IN THE SAAR

A plebiscite was to be held in the Saar in January 1935 to decide whether or not the territory should be returned to Germany on the termination, on 1st March, of the League Governing Commission. In the late autumn of 1934 the possibility of grave disturbances in the Saar at the time of the plebiscite was causing widespread anxiety. Mr. Eden therefore went to the meeting of the Council in Geneva in December with authority from the British Government to state that, provided France and Germany agreed, and provided other countries were prepared to make a similar contribution, the United Kingdom would be prepared to send a contingent of troops to the Saar as part of an international force to keep order for the duration of the plebiscite. Mr. Eden made the proposal in a speech to the Council of the League on 5th December 1934.

HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT in the United Kingdom have no greater desire than to see close and friendly relations between the nations of the world; more especially, of course, are we concerned for the establishment and maintenance of such relations between those Powers of Western Europe who are our immediate neighbours. It is for this reason that we are particularly happy to note the outcome of the negotiations at Rome, the credit for which belongs in so large a measure to the representative of Italy at this Council, to his colleagues on the Committee of Three, and to the two parties who have assisted him to reach agreement.

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M. Laval has raised one outstanding difficulty which still remains to be resolved. As in the case of other plebiscites, so here one cannot deny the possibility that there might be, however great the goodwill on either side, a certain amount of excitement and ebullition in the period during and after the plebiscite. This must clearly be an anxious period and one calling for special precaution. Now the Saar area is not of course provided with any regular armed forces; it has to rely entirely upon its own police. The administration is to be congratulated on the success with which it has faced a difficult problem for a long time.

There is, however, a plain duty which rests upon the Council through the Governing Commission for the maintenance of order, and it is very important that this duty should be properly discharged in the interests both of the Council of the League and of good understanding between the nations most directly interested. In these difficult and anxious matters there is one maxim the truth of which cannot surely be challenged: prevention is better than cure. It is no doubt true that there are forces available for use in an emergency not very far away, but that, in the opinion of His Majesty's Government, would not be the best way to deal with the situation. The right way is not to provide for the introduction of troops from outside after the emergency had arisen, but to see if it is possible now, with the authority of the Council and with the assent of France and Germany, to take steps which would prevent the possibility of such trouble arising. The way to do this would appear to be by means of the introduction into the Saar on the responsibility of the Council as a whole, before the plebiscite took place, of an international force, which should not include troops of either of the two parties concerned, for the

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purpose of keeping order. I repeat that His Majesty's Government attach the greatest importance to the view that prevention is better than cure.

At this stage then, let me make clear the position of His Majesty's Government. If the Council of the League decides, as a result of the information which has been laid before it, that it is desirable for an international force to be stationed in the Saar for the purpose of maintaining order in connection with the forthcoming plebiscite, and if the United Kingdom were invited to co-operate in this matter, then, provided other countries which are conveniently situated for this purpose were prepared to make a contribution and on the condition that both France and Germany assented to this arrangement, we should also be prepared to supply a suitable proportion of such an international force.

His Majesty's Government have authorized me to make this statement because of their wish to make a positive contribution to the discharge of the responsibility which we all share as members of the League of Nations. Our object in so doing is to assist the Governing Commission and the League in their onerous task and to show our willingness to co-operate in its successful fulfilment. His Majesty's Government are confident that this statement, dictated as it is by a readiness to make our contribution to the pacification of Europe and to good neighbourly relations between its States, will be received in this sense by the Governing Commission, the Council, and our fellow members of the League, and more particularly by the two parties most directly interested in the area concerned.

A NEW ERA OF OPPORTUNITY

Over nine-tenths of the voters in the Saar declared in January 1935 for return to the German Reich. Mr. Eden broadcast from Geneva on 18th January.

THE future of the Saar territory has now been settled in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles. The Council of the League of Nations decided yesterday evening, less than forty-eight hours after the result of the voting was known, that the Saar territory should return to Germany on 1st March.

There are still a few outstanding questions on which final agreement has not yet been reached. The Committee of the League Council, which has in the past played so important a part in this matter, will endeavour to settle these questions in agreement with the French and German governments. Moreover, both governments have undertaken that if they cannot reach agreement by 15th February they will accept the verdict of the Council upon the issues then outstanding.

The League of Nations may justifiably be congratulated upon the peaceful discharge of its anxious responsibility. The League owes its success to several factors, of which I will mention two. First that law and order in the Saar during the last few critical weeks have been assured by the presence of an international force composed of British, Italian, Dutch, and Swedish contingents. Second, that the Committee of Three, presided over by the Italian representative of the League Council, Baron Aloisi, was able, before the voting took place, to reach a series of agreements with the French and German Governments on the greater

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part of the questions which the change of government of the Saar territory inevitably entailed. . . .

I welcome this opportunity to express once again the appreciation of His Majesty's Government of the tact and patience of Baron Aloisi and his Committee which have assisted the League to handle one of the most prickly problems in its history with such smooth success. Nor must we forget the truly exceptional services of Mr. Geoffrey Knox, the English President of the Saar Governing Commission, and his helpers. Their task was indeed an arduous one, and the rigorous impartiality which they displayed in the most harassing circumstances has earned for them the gratitude of all.

There is universal satisfaction that this vexed question of the future of the Saar territory is at length in a fair way to be resolved. Our country has but one aim in its policy towards Europe, to see frank and friendly relations established and maintained between each country on that continent. For ourselves, we shall assuredly be ready in the future, as in the past, to render all the help that lies in our power to make understanding more frank and friendship more sincere. It is surely not unreasonable to hope that the solution of this long-standing problem will open a new era of opportunity. If it is to be well used, the nations will have to contribute something more to the common stock than professions of goodwill, however sincerely delivered. Europe suffers at this time from a sense of insecurity. If we are to lay this troubled spirit all nations must in the months that lie ahead combine to promote that greater sense of confidence which is in itself an essential element in an enduring peace.

THE MURDERS AT MARSEILLES

The murder at Marseilles on 9th October 1934 of King Alexander of Yugoslavia and M. Barthou, French Foreign Minister, by a Croat terrorist whose passport had been visaed in Hungary resulted in a serious dispute between the Yugoslav and Hungarian Governments which threatened to have the gravest consequences for European peace. The dispute was brought before a special session of the Council of the League of Nations in December. Mr. Eden addressed the Council on 8th December.

EVERY member of the Council must feel the deepest sympathy for the Yugoslav Government in the tragic loss which their country has suffered, and in the deep grief of a nation's mourning. We all of us share the sorrow of a people so brutally deprived of the guidance of a Sovereign of exceptional gifts and rare statesmanship. We mourn the death and we condemn with a spontaneous and deeply felt indignation the manner of that death. To us who have sat round this table with M. Barthou as a colleague, the loss suffered on the same tragic occasion by the French Republic is a personal loss also. His courage, his brilliance, and his scholarship aptly embodied in his personality the gifts of the great people whom he has represented here.

In the unhappy circumstances of the present time, while the memory of recent events is still fresh in our minds, we can all be thankful that we possess in the League of Nations a forum in which matters of this nature can be investigated in a calm and judicial atmosphere, and that the Yugoslav Government have adopted the course of resorting to this forum.

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If I intervene at this point in the discussion it is not because the United Kingdom can claim to be more closely interested than others in either the specific or the general question raised by the Yugoslav Government, or in the reply made by the Hungarian representative. On the contrary, it is because I feel that the representative of His Majesty's Government can view the subject under debate with no less friendship, but maybe with a little more detachment than others that I make my observations at this stage. We can claim, I hope, a sincere friendship for all the nations concerned in this matter, and we have had ourselves in our history an extensive experience of the treatment of inhabitants of other countries who have sought refuge on our shores. None the less, we have suffered relatively little anxiety from the abuse by such persons of the asylum offered to them. For this reason, although deeply concerned that this Council meeting shall remove the suspicions and assuage the passions which the tragedy of Marseilles has aroused, I claim to speak with a certain detachment on what are admittedly exceedingly delicate and complex issues.

Let me confess at the outset that I feel some difficulty in forming any opinion as to the responsibilities for the tragic events which have occurred, while the trial of those charged with being concerned in the assassinations in Marseilles has not yet taken place. A number of individuals who are believed to be either principals, accomplices, or accessories are, I understand, at this moment under detention. Proceedings are still *sub judice* in France, where the crime was committed, and in these circumstances it is incumbent upon us to proceed with extreme caution. I confess at once that the formulation of any definite opinion on

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the detailed points made by the Yugoslav Government, in that part of their communication which relates to the past, seems to me at the moment to be attended by great difficulties; though this does not, of course, mean that the Council should not now take any steps in its power to effect a satisfactory settlement of this part of the matters which are before us.

I pass now to the more general question raised by the Yugoslav Government—the prevention of terrorism. The use or abuse of the so-called right of asylum involves at least three aspects of the political organization of States: law, administration, and treaties. We have to consider how these three factors of a single problem operate in and between a number of States. First, law. The simplest and most terrible manifestation of terrorism, namely murder and conspiracy to murder, is, no doubt, contrary to the law of all civilized States. But there may be other forms of action, less violent, but highly undesirable, which are illegal in some countries and not in others. Secondly, administration. Every country, I suppose, now possesses adequate powers for the supervision of aliens, but it is clear that the discretion with which those powers are exercised vitally affects the use or abuse of the right of asylum. Thirdly, treaties, and, in particular, the extradition treaties which exist in considerable variety as between most European countries.

It would, in my view, be difficult for proposals for the prevention of terrorism to be made without an adequate examination of this field of law, administration, and treaties.

May I, at this point, say a few words upon what I believe to be the attitude of public opinion in the United Kingdom

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towards the right of asylum? The personal liberty, the freedom of action of the individual citizen, is at once my country's proudest boast and her most cherished tradition. You will not, therefore, expect me to utter any phrase in criticism of privileges which every Englishman holds dear. It is this same tradition which has governed our attitude towards the right of asylum, and which has led us for many centuries in our history to extend a welcome to those who have sought refuge amongst us. Our love of liberty, however, has not led us to confuse liberty with licence, and His Majesty's Government do not tolerate in territories under their jurisdiction the abuse of personal freedom which consists in employing or advocating the employment of illegal or violent action against constituted authority, whether at home or abroad.

I feel that I must now mention another form of licence against which we must be on our guard. While the right to freedom of speech and liberty of the press is naturally dear to me as an Englishman, I should be the last to deny the harm that can be done by the immoderate expression of opinion, which can nowadays be widely and rapidly disseminated by a variety of agencies beyond the boundaries of the State itself. Just as it is our duty here to refrain from the use of language liable to estrange or embitter feeling in foreign countries, so it is our duty to make use of such powers as we may possess to prevent or discourage the use of such language, whether by the organs of public opinion or by private individuals.

These matters have now passed into another phase. They are before the Council of the League and it is for us to deal with them. Here and now, therefore, is an opportunity for all of us to take stock of a new situation, and, as I hope, to

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make good resolutions. The issues raised are in the League's custody for the time being, but the League's efforts cannot be expected to come to fruition, unless there be a determined effort upon all sides to practise moderation in word and deed.

The members of the Council will appreciate the heavy responsibility that lies upon us not to extend but strictly to circumscribe the limits of this question. We must rigidly exclude a tendency in the discussions to introduce into the subject which is before us matters which have for long past caused differences of opinion between nations, but which do not immediately arise in the documents before us. This must be firmly resisted.

If we are to serve the cause of peace we must segregate the domain of facts from that of motives and of policy. A difficult situation must not be further embittered. Existing animosities must not be further provoked. On the contrary, there is a definite responsibility upon each one of us at this Council table to use the machinery of the League in spirit as well as in practice.

I do not conceal from the Council that certain of the reports which I have recently received give cause for anxiety. There is a heavy responsibility upon all of us at this Council table not to allow local conditions to deteriorate while we are seeking here to secure a solution of the questions before us. I would beg, therefore, that every effort should be made to assist the Council in its task of limiting the extent of our problem. That is surely the first step to its wise solution.

SETTLEMENT OF THE YUGO-SLAV-HUNGARIAN DISPUTE

At the unanimous request of the Members of the Council Mr. Eden acted as rapporteur, and it was his task to seek to negotiate a settlement. After prolonged discussion at Geneva Mr. Eden informed the Council on the 10th December 1934 that provisional agreement had been reached.

IN the course of the discussion which has taken place during the last few days the Council has heard the cases of the two parties fully presented by their representatives. I shall not attempt to summarize those cases.

It must be observed that the Council is not a court of justice. It has no means at its disposal for undertaking judicial inquiries. Its function is to assist the parties to re-establish the political relations which are desirable between Members of the League.

In these circumstances, it is my duty as *rapporteur* to make proposals as to the action which the Council should take with a view to fulfilling its task. I have listened carefully to all that has been said on both sides during the debate, and I have acquainted myself with the documents. I am bound to say that, if the whole question of responsibility has not been completely elucidated, it none the less emerges that certain Hungarian authorities may have incurred, at any rate through negligence, certain responsibilities relative to acts connected with the preparation of the Marseilles crime. It is for this reason that I have thought it right that the Hungarian Government should itself undertake

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an inquiry and take the appropriate action as regards those of its authorities whose culpability may be established, reporting to the Council the steps which it has taken to this end.

I think, moreover, that the Council will wish the possibilities of international action for the repression of terrorism to be fully explored; the French delegation has presented to us a series of propositions. With this object, I have made proposals for a careful study of the subject, in accordance with the Assembly resolution as to the preparatory procedure to be followed on the case of general conventions to be negotiated under the auspices of the League.

In conclusion, may I make one observation? The Council has in the past often appealed to the wisdom and spirit of conciliation of governments who have reposed confidence in the League of Nations. None of these governments will think today that I exceed my rights as *rapporteur* if I formulate a hope, a very sincere hope, for that good understanding which should subsist between the parties and express my confidence that they will avoid anything which might be of a nature to compromise it.

I now have the honour to propose to the Council the following resolution:

I

The Council,

Convinced that it interprets the sentiments of the whole League of Nations;

Unanimously deploring the crime which occasioned the loss of the lives of the knightly King Alexander I of Yugoslavia, the Unifier, and of M. Louis Barthou:

Condemns this odious crime;

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Associates itself with the mourning of the Yugoslav nation and of the French nation;

And insists that all those responsible should be punished.

II

The Council

Recalls, that it is the duty of every State neither to encourage nor tolerate on its territory any terrorist activity with a political purpose;

That every State must do all in its power to prevent and repress acts of this nature and must for this purpose lend its assistance to governments which request it;

Is of opinion that these duties devolve, in particular, on the Members of the League of Nations in view of the obligations of the Covenant in relation to the engagement they have undertaken to respect the territorial integrity and the existing political independence of the other Members.

III

The Council,

Desirous that the good understanding upon which peace depends should exist between Members of the League, and expressing its confidence that they will avoid anything which might be of a nature to compromise it;

Noting that, as the result of the discussions which have taken place before the Council and of the documents which have been communicated to it—in particular, the diplomatic correspondence exchanged between the Hungarian and Yugoslav Governments from 1931 to 1934—various questions relative to the existence or the activities outside Yugoslav territory of terrorist elements have not been settled

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in a manner which has given satisfaction to the Yugoslav Government;

Being of opinion, as the result of these discussions and documents, that certain Hungarian authorities may have assumed, at any rate through negligence, certain responsibilities relative to acts having a connection with the preparation of the crime of Marseilles;

Considering, on the other hand, that it is incumbent on the Hungarian Government, conscious of its international responsibilities, to take at once appropriate punitive action in the case of any of its authorities whose culpability may be established;

Convinced of the goodwill of the Hungarian Government to perform this duty:

Requests it to communicate to the Council the measures it takes to this effect.

IV

The Council,

Considering that the rules of international law concerning the repression of terrorist activity are not at present sufficiently precise to guarantee efficiently international co-operation in this matter:

Decides to set up a committee of experts to study this question with a view to drawing up a preliminary draft of an international convention to assure the repression of conspiracies or crimes committed with a political and terrorist purpose;

Decides that this committee shall be composed of eleven members, the Governments of Belgium, Chile, the United Kingdom, France, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Roumania, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Spain, and Switzerland, each being invited to appoint a member;

SETTLEMENT OF YUGOSLAV-HUNGARIAN DISPUTE

Refers to this committee for examination the suggestions which have been presented to the Council by the French Government, and requests other governments which may wish to present suggestions to send them to the Secretary-General, so that they may be examined by the committee;

Invites the committee to report to the Council, so that the latter may apply the procedure laid down in the resolution of the Assembly of 25th September 1931 concerning the drawing up of general conventions negotiated under the auspices of the League of Nations.

[The resolution was adopted unanimously by the Members of the Council, including the parties concerned.]

CONCILIATION AND GOODWILL

The provisional settlement of the Yugoslav-Hungarian dispute in December 1934 was finally confirmed by Mr. Eden at a meeting of the Council on 25th May 1935.

IN a statement to the Council on 18th January 1935 I asked that members of the Council who might have observations to make upon the communication from the Hungarian Government dated 12th January should be good enough to send their observations to me in writing as early as convenient, so that I might then make such proposals as might seem appropriate.

In response to this invitation I received communications from the Yugoslav, Czechoslovak, and Roumanian Governments which have just been circulated to my colleagues on the Council. I have also received a communication on a point of detail from the French Government, which I have brought to the knowledge of the Hungarian Government.

In the light of these communications I might have been justified in calling for supplementary information from the Hungarian Government on certain points having a bearing upon the execution of the resolution of 10th December 1934, which has continued to be the basis of the Council's action in this matter and which retains its full import. In view, however, of the goodwill which I am happy to say animates the Yugoslav Government, and of the desire which I feel sure it shares with all the members of the Council to consider that the examination of this question before the

CONCILIATION AND GOODWILL

Council is closed, I do not propose to carry the matter any further.

I am confident that I can rely upon the goodwill of the Hungarian Government and the spirit of conciliation of the Yugoslav Government to make it now possible for the question before us to be thus disposed of.

I take this opportunity to express on behalf of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, and, I am confident, of all my colleagues on the Council, the earnest hope that this settlement of the question will contribute to promote good relations between the two countries and thereby assist in the development of international concord in that part of Europe.

PROBLEMS OF COLLECTIVE PEACE

In February 1935 M. Flandin and M. Laval visited London to discuss a possible general European settlement and a Western Air Pact, which might be a separate treaty or part of the general settlement. A communiqué was issued on 3rd February.

In March the British Government published its first White Paper on Defence. In the course of the same month Herr Hitler announced conscription in Germany, and the French Government lengthened military service to two years. It also became known that Germany had already raised an air force of considerable strength. Sir John Simon, then Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and Mr. Eden went to Berlin on 24th March to discuss with Herr Hitler the Anglo-French communiqué of 3rd February. Sir John Simon returned to London to report to the Cabinet, and in reply to a question in the House of Commons said that "considerable divergence of opinion was revealed by the conversations." Mr. Eden meanwhile visited Moscow, Warsaw, and Prague.

In April the Stresa conference was called in order that Great Britain, France, and Italy might discuss the European situation in the light of Germany's treaty repudiations. The United Kingdom representatives were Mr. Ramsay MacDonald and Sir John Simon. Mr. Eden, who was unable to attend the Conference owing to illness, made a survey of the international situation in a speech to the East and West Fulham Conservative and Unionist Association on 16th May.

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I AM glad to have this opportunity of speaking to you tonight of the international situation. That situation is being widely discussed and anxiously examined by public opinion in this country at this time, and, while I would not for a moment pretend to any greater wisdom or vision in appraising the present situation than others, I have had opportunities of observation and comparison in the past few months which were in fact exceptional. It is of the impressions derived from these opportunities that I would speak to you tonight.

First then, as to the broad general situation. No one who has been on such a journey as I was privileged to make can doubt the reality or the formidable character of the difficulties of the present European situation. Formidable as they are, however, they are not, I am convinced, insuperable; but if they are to be overcome every nation has its part to play. As to our part, I shall have more to say at the conclusion of my speech. At this stage I will content myself with saying that it is clear that ours should be to pursue a foreign policy that is frank, stalwart, and above all firm in support of the League of Nations and of the collective peace system.

Let me first recall the background of the European situation against which we set out upon our travels. The most important event in the international history of the past few months was undoubtedly the agreement reached in London between the French and British Governments on the 3rd February. There was surely good reason for hoping that this agreement would have made it clear to all that any lingering doubts as to Germany's true equality of status which might still remain anywhere ought no longer to be entertained. The communiqué of 3rd February stated

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definitely that nothing would contribute more to the restoration of confidence and the prospects of peace among nations than a general settlement freely negotiated between Germany and the other Powers. It was in an attempt to carry this work a stage further and to facilitate at the same time general European appeasement that our travels were undertaken. You will have read the account which the Foreign Secretary has given of the outcome of the visit to Berlin and I would like to recall in a few sentences why that outcome did not fulfil all the hopes which had been entertained. The London communiqué dealt in the main with two subjects—security and armaments. On neither of these heads was it possible to record substantial progress at Berlin. As to security, Germany has made an offer in respect of a multilateral pact of non-aggression in Eastern Europe. This is welcome news and it is important that every effort should be made to make the best possible constructive use of that offer. This country, however, bases its conception of European security upon the League of Nations and unfortunately we were not able to record Germany's present willingness to resume her membership of that organization. It has many times been made clear that public opinion in this country would warmly welcome the return of Germany to the League of Nations. That is all the more true because membership of the League of Nations in our view is a privilege which each nation, just precisely because it is inspired by the principles of the Covenant, should be proud to assume.

Then with regard to armaments. There, too, the results did not fulfil our hopes. It is quite true that the German Government emphasized, as they have many times previously emphasized, that they wanted an arms convention.

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That is all to the good, but the ultimate value of such a declaration must clearly be dependent upon whether or no the country that makes it is prepared to accept limitations such as afford a reasonable prospect of general agreement. Let me explain the difficulties that here exist. I will take one example: effectives. It has always been assumed hitherto in all disarmament discussions that I can recall that in any agreement as to military forces there would be parity between the effectives stationed in Europe of the three great Western continental Powers—France, Germany, and Italy. Such was the proposal embodied in our draft convention—the MacDonald Plan, as it has been called—where the figure of 200,000 was proposed for France, Germany and Italy, while a much larger figure of 500,000 was given to Russia. It is important to remember that Germany herself has in the past frequently praised this draft convention and has regretted what she has described as departures from its principles. Indeed, this convention was accepted by the Disarmament Conference as a whole, including Germany, as the basis for any future convention. A year ago when I visited Berlin, Rome, and Paris this principle of parity between the three Western continental Powers was nowhere disputed. Germany then asked, however, that the figure should not be 200,000 but 300,000. If the German Government now maintains its need for 550,000, it must be clear that at such a very high figure parity between the three Western continental Powers on an equal basis of training is frankly unattainable.

I appreciate that in the view of the German Government this figure is justified by her anxieties in Eastern Europe. I will therefore now turn for a moment to the situation in Eastern Europe.

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Let us take Soviet Russia first. It is no part of my purpose to discuss the internal politics of any country, and to do so would lead us on to controversial ground with which we are not here concerned. Whatever view we take, however, of the experiment at present being tried out in Soviet Russia, I have never been in any country which has more clearly cause to be fully occupied with work at home for many years to come. There is much leeway to be made up. This I do not think that many people in Soviet Russia itself who are at present in charge of her destinies would dispute. An observer would indeed expect that Soviet Russia for her own sake would be adverse to anything which would dislocate the machinery which she is so laboriously building up, and no greater dislocation could be imagined than war. Nor must the geographical factor be overlooked. The distances which separate the greater part of Germany from Russia are truly vast. They have to be travelled to be understood. We in this country can readily visualize the wide territories that separate England from Switzerland. The distance which is travelled across Polish territory in going from Berlin to Moscow is virtually as great. Surely, since the re-creation of the great Polish State—a State which is both ready and able to play its part, and a very considerable part, on the European stage—the possibility of an aggression by Russia upon Germany has become a geographical anachronism. For these reasons and for others which I will not now develop I find it difficult to share that apprehension of military aggression by Soviet Russia which appears to exist in Germany today. . . .

The British are not “anti” any nation in Europe. They are not hostile to any people, nor do they regard any as antipathetic to them. The British people have never been

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good haters. Their inclination has always been to forgive and forget at once. Sometimes indeed this readiness has even seemed a little incomprehensible to those who have been our comrades in arms, but it is an essential element in the British character. As in the past, so today. We are not "anti" any nation, but we should be, we must be "anti" any who might seek by force to break the peace. We shall always be found arrayed on the side of the collective system against any government or people who seek by a return to power politics to break up the peace which by that system we are seeking to create. And let us not forget that the Covenant itself provides the machinery by which the peaceful settlement of international disputes can be secured.

In this short compass I have tried to give you some impression of the problems of international policy as they appear to me today as the outcome of the journeys I have made. I hope that you will agree that they justify my opening comment that formidable as are the difficulties they are not insuperable. We in this country desire nothing so much as the maintenance of peace and good relations between our neighbours. Inevitably, therefore, our public opinion will in the last resort be most influenced not so much by declarations, however sincerely or indeed fervently made, as by the constructive contribution that any given government is willing to make to secure the common good.

GUY'S CLIFFE FÊTE, 15TH JUNE 1935

At the beginning of June 1935 Mr. Ramsay MacDonald resigned the Premiership, and was succeeded by Mr. Baldwin. Among the Cabinet changes which took place as a result Sir Samuel Hoare was appointed Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and Mr. Eden was promoted to Cabinet rank as Minister for League of Nations Affairs.

SINCE you and I were last assembled at our annual demonstration in the constituency, the National Government has been reconstructed. The essential factor to note in that reconstruction is that the national character of the Government is maintained intact. I am sure that you will agree that this is indispensable at this time, when conditions at home and abroad are still far from being such as would justify us in returning to the party system as we knew it before 1931. . . .

It needs but one glance at the world outside these shores to appreciate the essential need for sound and stable yet progressive government at this time. A distinguished foreigner remarked to me in conversation the other day that England was today unquestionably the best-governed country in the world. He did not mean by that, I fear, that the members of His Majesty's Government in this country were necessarily better than those in the government of every other country. But he did mean, I am sure, that in the sharp stress created by the manifold political and economic problems of the present day our own method of

government had proved both the most adaptable and the most serviceable, and the political genius of our people had shown the best means of using it. I am myself convinced of the truth of this. It has indeed been a factor of the first importance in enabling us to meet the challenge of these critical years and to lead the world, as in fact we are doing today, in the struggle for better conditions of life for mankind.

My own chief anxiety is naturally concerned with foreign affairs, and in that sphere no one will pretend that our task is easy or that our difficulties are slight. Nevertheless there are certain guiding principles which we should, I believe, keep steadily before us. The nations today require a sense of security. It is only thus that the growth of armaments will be stayed, and we have all of us learnt at least enough to know that competition in armaments is not the primrose path to peace. Yet if nations feel insecure they will re-arm and no one can prevent them. How then is security to be created and peace to be preserved? Not, I believe, by the system of alliances of the years before the war. If forces are nicely balanced fear, scarcely less than ambition, may one day unloose the dogs of war. I know of only one way by which that sense of security can be created. All nations must contribute to inspire confidence by making it clear that they are prepared to stand by each other, each playing their part in the maintenance of international order. That is how I understand a collective peace system, and it is because the League of Nations is the only expression of such a system that I know of that I am convinced we must give it our full support.

To make such a system effective—effective that is, so that it can resist every strain—and it could be made so—would

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require many ingredients. Some of these unhappily are lacking today. But there is one ingredient that is indispensable and need not and should not be lacking, and that is the support of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom. Mr. Baldwin's first speech as Prime Minister of the reconstructed National Government showed clearly how keenly alive is the Government to this essential element in our foreign policy. We do in fact set such great store by the League because we sincerely believe it to be the best means of settling international difficulties, of restoring confidence to a troubled world, and of ushering in a new international order under which peace shall endure.

THE ANGLO-GERMAN NAVAL AGREEMENT, THE AIR PACT, AND THE ITALO-ABYSSINIAN DISPUTE

In May 1935 the Anglo-German Naval Agreement was concluded.

The Walwal incident at the end of 1934 had provided Signor Mussolini with an excuse for furthering his ambitions in East Africa, and by June 1935 a serious dispute had arisen between Italy and Abyssinia. Mr. Eden was instructed by His Majesty's Government to visit Rome in June 1935 with a plan for conciliation, which was rejected by Signor Mussolini.

In a Debate in the House of Commons on 11th July Mr. Eden replied to the critics of the Government on these and various other points.

THIS Debate has ranged over a wide number of subjects, and I propose to confine myself to trying to meet criticism and answer questions upon three main topics—the Naval Agreement, the Air Pact, and the Italo-Abyssinian dispute. I will also try to meet the criticisms of the Right Honourable Member for Carnarvon Boroughs [Mr. Lloyd George] with reference to the Stresa Conference and the Geneva resolutions which followed it. I would like to give one reassurance to my Right Honourable Friend the Member for Epping [Mr. Churchill]. He was anxious about internal affairs at the Foreign Office, and was afraid we should

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suffer from diarchy. Perhaps his long association with the India Bill has resulted in his being obsessed with diarchy. In actual fact, no such system exists and no such system is contemplated. There are no two Kings of Brentford on one throne. My Right Honourable Friend the Foreign Secretary is king, and I am very proud and privileged to be allowed to work with him.

May I now turn to the subjects which have been raised, taking first the Anglo-German Naval Agreement? Let me make it clear that His Majesty's Government do not admit that the conclusion of that Agreement is contrary to the principle of co-operation which was embodied in the London communiqué of 3rd February and in the Stresa Resolution, to which the Government remain firmly attached. There has been no question, I ask the Committee to appreciate, of our making it possible for Germany to do something which she would not otherwise have done. On the contrary, the purpose of this step has been to circumscribe, by agreement with Germany, the ultimate consequences of the unilateral decision to which Germany had already begun to give effect.

His Majesty's Government have always maintained—and here I answer the honourable Member for Caerphilly—and the late Labour Government also maintained, that naval armaments differ in certain respects from land and air armaments in that naval armaments are already subject to and limited by the Naval Agreements previously entered into at Washington and London. But clearly we could not admit—and this is the point which I wish the Committee to appreciate—that such discussions, affecting the future of those agreements which are shortly to expire, could be held up and the possibility of their favourable outcome deliber-

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ately deferred pending the conclusion of an international agreement in regard to land and air armaments. It was our intention and purpose to press on with all three branches of this necessarily interconnected subject, but we regard this Anglo-German Naval Agreement as an essential preparatory step and a direct contribution to "the conclusion"—to quote from another communiqué—"of agreements regarding armaments generally." That was recommended in the London communiqué of 3rd February and reaffirmed at Stresa.

Let us be clear what the criticism is. The criticism is, first, that there has been a lack of co-operation and that the parties to the London and Stresa Resolutions must not conclude bilateral agreements for the purpose of advancing a general settlement. That criticism that we must not make treaties or agreements, two by two, applies equally to the Franco-Russian Treaty. In fact, however, we have ourselves no desire or intention whatever to criticize that Treaty, nor have we done so, nor shall we do so. Furthermore, so far as naval armaments are concerned, Germany is prepared from now onwards to exchange, on a reciprocal basis with other naval Powers, particulars in regard to dates of laying down and characteristics of future warships, even in advance of the conclusion of a general naval treaty. We may be sure that this result would never have been achieved without the prior conclusion of the Anglo-German Agreement.

Then, the criticism is sometimes made abroad that we are chiefly concerned to reach agreement on naval armaments because the sea is the element which most directly concerns us; in other words, that our motives have been frankly selfish. Let me answer this charge by putting a

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question as to our own attitude. Should we object if other Powers concluded similar arrangements, in regard to land and air armaments, with Germany; arrangements similar to that which we have just concluded in respect of naval armaments? The answer is, surely, that, far from objecting, we should regard such separate agreements as an important step in the direction of peace and appeasement, provided, of course, that our own liberty of action remained unimpaired, just as the liberty of action of other foreign Powers would remain entirely unimpaired by the Anglo-German Naval Agreement, and provided that the purpose of that agreement was to facilitate the general settlement referred to in the London communiqué of the 3rd February.

I had a personal experience in this matter which I should like to recall to the Committee. In February of last year I was instructed by His Majesty's Government to go to Berlin, one of those journeys that have caused anxiety, to see the German Chancellor and to discuss with him the proposals which we had laid down in January of last year, to attempt to secure agreement upon them, and to find out from him what was Germany's attitude to our own memorandum of the 29th January, and generally to learn what proposals he was prepared to accept in respect of armaments limitation. At that time Germany was prepared to agree to a ten years' convention, to an air force which, for the period of that convention, would not exceed fifty per cent of that of France, and to an army on a parity with France, at a figure of 300,000 men. The French Government at that time, for reasons which I do not criticize—they may have been good reasons, but for whatever reasons—rejected that offer. Is not that an arrangement upon which we, all of us, would be only too anxious to agree

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today? Believe me, there is no policy which is more costly, both to the taxpayer and to peace, than a policy of missing the bus.

It may be argued that the size of the programme which it is now revealed that Germany is already engaged upon is an argument against entering into fresh agreements with her; but surely the reverse is the case. "The very fact that Germany is shown to have rearmed so much already is the strongest possible argument for accepting her offer to limit the future course of her naval armaments." The Right Honourable Gentleman the Member for Carnarvon Boroughs instanced the growth of the German army, and I fully agree with him as to the seriousness of that expansion. Germany now asks and is organizing an army of 550,000 men. In February last year she was prepared to agree to an army of 300,000 men. Would it not have been a tragedy for this country and the world had the history of land armaments been repeated on the sea? I come to another argument which has been made. It has been suggested by the honourable Member for Caerphilly that our action was calculated to diminish the prestige of the League of Nations. I cannot, I confess, follow him in that argument.

This agreement which we have concluded is, in our judgement, an essential step to the general limitation of naval armaments. Had it not been taken by His Majesty's Government, all foreign Powers, wherever they may be situated, must have suffered from the race in naval armaments which would have resulted. As it is, other naval Powers know the limits of German naval expansion as regulated by this agreement, and they can regulate their programmes accordingly. One of the primary purposes of the League of Nations is to limit and, if possible, to reduce

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world armaments, and the League can only gain in influence and authority if, as the result of this agreement, which we regard as a useful contribution to a general settlement between all the naval Powers, the threatened race in naval armaments can be prevented. The Right Honourable Gentleman the Member for Limehouse and the honourable Member for Caerphilly severely criticized this agreement. They said that they could not welcome it, and I want to ask a question of His Majesty's Opposition. Are we to understand from the speeches to which we have listened today that the Socialist Party as a whole is opposed to this agreement? Would it have wished us to reject this offer for the limitation of naval armaments? I pause for an answer. I think the House can draw its own conclusions.

I turn to the speech of the Right Honourable Gentleman the Member for Darwen [Sir H. Samuel], which, I think, the Committee appreciated as fully responding to the appeal of my Right Honourable Friend the Foreign Secretary for constructive criticism. He has asked us certain questions in connection with the Air Pact which I will attempt to answer. He complained that the Government were wrong to admit the interconnection of the various problems mentioned in the communiqué of the 3rd February. His reasoning was that what we have done with naval armaments we should do in the air, and that we should do what we could piecemeal because in the past we had failed by trying to do too much. Some of us may have sympathy with the arguments of the Right Honourable Gentleman in that respect, and we may appreciate his point of view, but it is necessary to understand the position of others. There are certain Powers which definitely take the view that these subjects are interdependent, and an

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agreement on any one of them can only be reached simultaneously with an agreement upon all the others. If we deny that thesis, the possibility of arriving at an air pact at all is lost.

Pacts by their very name require participation, and if we are to ensure participation we have to go some way to meet the various points of view upon this subject. That is exactly the object of the negotiations upon which we are engaged—and they are very difficult—at the present time. There have been exchanges of views with the Powers concerned on two matters affecting the Air Force. The first of these is the general procedure for the negotiation of an air pact and the relation of that procedure to the negotiations on the other questions—the Eastern Pact, the Danubian Pact, and so forth—which are under consideration. That is one set of subjects about which we are now in negotiation with other governments. The second matter on which the views of Powers have been exchanged is the general form which the Air Pact might assume. Those exchanges are now being actively pursued, through the diplomatic channel, I hasten to assure the Committee. They are as yet by no means complete. I regret that I cannot at this stage give the House any further news upon them save to answer the question of the honourable Member for East Wolverhampton [Mr. Mander] as to supervision. It is certainly our view that any air pact that can be negotiated will require some form of supervision, the form of which will have to be determined in the course of the negotiations.

Now I will say a word about the speech of the Right Honourable Member for Limehouse [Mr. Attlee]. I confess that I somewhat resented that speech. It seemed to me to be one long sneer. The Right Honourable Gentleman said

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that we have reduced the League to a farce. He said we had made no attempts to fulfil our pledges. He said we had run away on every occasion. I ask the Right Honourable Gentleman, has the Government run away from its extremely arduous responsibilities as a member of the League in respect of Danzig? My Right Honourable Friend performed the most important task of *rapporteur* when he was Foreign Secretary. Has the Government run away from its responsibilities in the Bolivia-Paraguay dispute? Was it not we who proposed the embargo on arms and saw it was carried through? Is it not now generally admitted that it was in part a result of that embargo that this conflict was at last brought to an end? May I remind the Right Honourable Member for Carnarvon Boroughs that though it is quite true that the agreement now reached was reached as the result of the intervention of the South American States, and we welcome it, that that intervention was on the basis of the work which the League Committee had already previously done, and the terms of agreement they have reached are almost identical with the terms the League Committee had suggested for a settlement a little time ago.

Did we run away, were we false to our obligations, when we proposed the formation of an international police force to go to the Saar? Again, did this Government neglect all its League responsibilities when it instructed its representative to act as *rapporteur* in the dispute between Hungary and Yugoslavia; or were we false to our obligations last May when the Abyssinian dispute came before the Council of the League? Can it really be said of us that we are pursuing an Imperialist Power Policy when we have offered a contribution of a part of British territory towards the solution of an international dispute? The Right Honourable

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Gentleman complained that the speech of my Right Honourable Friend the Foreign Secretary was not the speech of a supporter of the League. If he will say that he will say anything. The essence of my Right Honourable Friend's speech was that membership of the League of Nations is the key of our foreign policy. . . .

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Let me deal with one or two questions which have been asked about Abyssinia. The first charge brought against us is that we are interfering in a dispute with which we have no concern. This Government, and other governments which have preceded us, have repeatedly declared that they founded their foreign policy upon their membership of the League. If this is not merely an empty declaration, it is impossible to maintain for a moment that this dispute is no concern of ours, for it is an essential feature of the Covenant that any dispute between two members of the League which threatens to disturb peace is a matter of concern to all governments. If, then, we found our foreign policy upon the League, this dispute is and must remain a matter of immediate and vital concern to us. We have recently been reminded, in the manifesto of the Council of Action, that a mere profession of interest in peace and of attachment to the League of Nations is not enough. I quite agree. It is, indeed, my chief criticism of this manifesto that it contains nothing else. If professions of interest are not enough, if this dispute is, as in fact it must be, a matter of concern to us, what are we to do about it?

In this connection I should like to say a word or two about the offer that I was instructed to put forward in Rome, about which there still seems to be some misconception. The purpose of the offer was to obtain a final settle-

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ment of the dispute between Italy and Abyssinia. The object was to give some *quid pro quo* to Abyssinia for territorial and economic concessions by her which the settlement of the dispute with Italy might entail. Had it been welcomed, the next step would have been to lay the facts before France, as the co-signatory of the 1906 Treaty, before Abyssinia, and before this House. Nothing was further from the mind of the Government than to go behind the back of anyone. When a new proposal is being ventilated it must be referred to someone first, and it was natural that the original inquiry should be made of the Italian Government. But, if the Italian Government did not look favourably on it, obviously there was no point in referring it to anyone else. We fully realize and we fully respect our obligations under the 1906 Treaty, but those obligations cannot and should not prevent us from having any ideas of our own, nor is it a breach of the Treaty to mention those ideas to other parties to the Treaty. Certainly we had a full right to make the suggestion, just as the other Powers retained the full right to prevent them from being carried into effect if they saw fit to do so.

I referred just now to territorial and economic concessions. It would be foolish to ignore the significance of these economic questions in relation to this problem. It is one of Italy's complaints that the economic relations with Abyssinia, which she maintains she wished to create, which she argues that she has herself fostered by building roads and harbours, which she claims that the Treaty of 1928 foreshadowed for her, and which she argues Abyssinia by her attitude has brought to an end—that these economic conditions play an important part in this dispute. What kind of economic concessions, the House may ask, had we in

mind? In the circumstances I shall not be expected to go into details, but the Committee may be interested if I give two examples. At present Abyssinia has a large number of foreign advisers. She has not one Italian adviser in a single important post. It might have been possible to improve on this position from the Italian point of view.

Secondly, it is conceivable—though I cannot say that agreement would necessarily have been reached on this subject—that Abyssinia would have been willing to allow in certain conditions, the settlement of the inhabitants of foreign countries in some portions of her country. I only mention these two examples to show the Committee what sort of economic concessions we had in our minds, and to show that it would be quite untrue to suggest, therefore, that ours was either an unfruitful or an empty offer. On the contrary, in an issue of this kind you have got to seek to find some solid basis of negotiation. By this means we sought to provide such a basis. It might have been possible for us thus to have contributed to a solution which would have given Italy a considerable measure of satisfaction, and which would still have been acceptable to Abyssinia.

There is one more criticism with which I must deal. It seems to be maintained, even by some Members in this House who have no objection to the offer, that there was an error in the method of presentation; and that it should not have been put forward by a Member of the Government but left to His Majesty's Ambassador in Rome to put forward himself. Two main considerations moved the Government in their decision. The first was that the primary object of my visits to Paris and Rome was to give the French and Italian Governments certain explanations about the Naval Agreement and to discuss with them how progress could be

made with the Air Pact and the other items mentioned in the London communiqué. It would have been possible, I suppose, to visualize a meeting and conversations with Signor Mussolini about these other matters without any mention of the subject of Abyssinia at all. But I think the Committee would agree that there would have been a certain unreality in such a procedure, since none of us can ignore the fact that the course of this dispute cannot but profoundly affect the course of European events.

His Majesty's Government, therefore, considered that the occasion of my visit should be used to sound Signor Mussolini as to the suggestions I have described as a possible basis for settlement. They decided to do it because they wished to underline to Signor Mussolini by a direct message from a Member of the British Government the gravity of their concern at the course events were taking. After most careful consideration we came to the conclusion that the chances of securing by negotiation upon these proposals the basis of agreement in Rome would be to some extent enhanced if the offer could be made in this way. In an issue where the stakes are so important no effort should be spared which might, to however small an extent, enhance the chances of success. My Right Honourable Friend the Member for Epping was very kind and very generous when he begged me to be careful of myself. But I think he will agree that what was at stake here was not whether the Government or individual Members of the Government should be taken care of, but whether a settlement of some kind could be arrived at. In the circumstances we were bound to take risks which, perhaps, in other circumstances I should not have been very happy to take myself.

Finally, one other argument. It is said that it is a bad

precedent—it is the argument of the Right Honourable Gentleman—to give away parts of British territory to solve the situation. I need perhaps hardly add that the Government fully realize that this proposal possessed certain disadvantages of which that one was the most serious. But we thought that they were small compared with the immense gain of a peaceful solution. If it should be thought in any quarter of the Committee that the making of this suggestion indicates that it can be regarded henceforth as a feature of British policy that British territory is to be given away whenever the accommodation of a difficult situation is sought for, then let me at once emphatically deny any such interpretation. Let me say here and now, such is not the policy of His Majesty's Government, and that it is indeed drawing a very false conclusion to think that, because in one particular instance there was a positive territorial contribution we were prepared to suggest which might have secured peace, this could in any way constitute a precedent. There is no such precedent, though in practice had the present proposal been accepted and allowed us to find a basis for a settlement, let us not forget that Great Britain stood to gain as much as any other nation.

In the last minute of my speech may I say a word about the future. The conciliation machinery set up by the Council last May appears unhappily to have broken down. We have yet received no official confirmation, but we are already considering the situation. In addition to this, of course, are the wider aspects of the dispute. In this connection we have been in consultation with the French Government. I must emphasize what my Right Honourable Friend has already referred to. I state definitely that at no time in the conversations which we have had with the French Government on

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this vexed affair has there been any foundation for any suggestion on our part that the French Government should join with us in economic action. That is quite a fair statement of the position. Our endeavour has been to discover whether the French Government had any constructive suggestions they could make towards a settlement of the dispute. We felt that we had made our contribution, and that it was their turn to make theirs.

In conclusion, I must put to the House one of the broader aspects of the reasons why the dispute causes anxiety. We want to make progress in Europe with all the items of the London Communiqué of 3rd February under which Europe may enter upon a new era. The world is too small today for us to live in a water-tight compartment, and the reaction of events in distant Africa may be felt in Europe. It is for this reason that I give to the Committee this assurance. His Majesty's Government must strive constantly and persistently for a settlement of the dispute, for upon a happy issue in this matter may depend the future of the peace structure which we have laboured so hard to build up in these post-War years.

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In August 1935 the representatives of Great Britain, France, and Italy met in Paris to negotiate for a settlement of the Italo-Abyssinian dispute. An Anglo-French plan was drawn up and communicated to Signor Mussolini, who declined to discuss the suggestions put forward. As a result the Three-Power Conference broke down.

At the meeting of the League Assembly on 11th September Sir Samuel Hoare made plain the attitude of the British Government and declared, "In conformity with its precise and explicit obligations the League stands, and my country stands with it, for the collective maintenance of the Covenant in its entirety, and particularly for steady and collective resistance to all acts of unprovoked aggression."

While every effort was being made by the Assembly and the Council of the League in Geneva to find a satisfactory solution without resort to arms, Italian troops invaded Abyssinia at the beginning of October. By the middle of October economic sanctions against Italy, under Article XVI of the Covenant, had been agreed to by forty-seven nations members of the League.

At the General Election in November the country gave its support to the National Government and its approval of collective economic action by the League against an aggressor.

At the Usher Hall, Edinburgh, 22nd November 1935.

WE in this hall tonight belong to many generations. Yet I may perhaps be forgiven if I preface what I have to say by a reference to what I believe to be the special

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responsibility of the generation to which I belong. That generation is the War generation and is so often called "the missing generation" that I sometimes wonder whether we ought not to apologize for being here at all. But the "missing generation" is a misnomer. It is true that our ranks have been decimated by the Great War. Yet those of us who survived have, I believe, something to contribute to the political life of our generation. Something which cannot be contributed to quite the same extent by those who never saw active service, either because they were too old or too young, and we are determined to contribute it. That something is born of a first-hand experience of war. We saw war. We do not want to see another. Scores of times during those four years, in many diverse places, we of the war generation must have put to ourselves the question, "How came it that this frenzy was let loose? Why did the Great War take place? How can we avoid another?"

It is the answer to that question that I would consider with you tonight. We must search for it amid the many baffling cross-currents of the political and economic life of the present day and we must use the experience of the past to teach us, and the faith of an ideal to inspire us in our task.

It is, I think, broadly true to say, though our foreign critics may be reluctant to admit it, that it has been the persistent aim, however vicariously pursued, of British foreign policy for many generations past to seek peace and ensue it. In spite of that wars have broken out, and above all the Great War broke out in 1914. Why? I do not doubt that the statesmen of that time in our own country, and more particularly Lord Grey, strove with the best of their ability to avert that calamity, but they failed, and—what is

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more serious for us—this country in particular failed notably to make its full contribution to prevent war. That was of course through no fault of Lord Grey or of his advisors, but it was due to the conditions in which they had to work—conditions which were in fact singularly ill-suited to enable this country to play her part and to assert her full influence, still less to display leadership among the nations. The system of the balance of power has many enemies. To them it may be replied that that system preserved the peace of the world for a considerable period. Yet ultimately it failed, as it was found to fail. For the preservation of peace by the balance of power demands a continuous and nice adjustment of forces. It is inevitable that in the continuous practice of this delicate operation there should occasionally be a miscalculation, or even a misunderstanding perhaps, as to which weight was in which balance. Moreover, in pursuit of that policy this country often appeared poised and hesitant. It is even possible that on one occasion at least war did break out just precisely on account of a miscalculation as to our own country's position. If so, that was stark tragedy. The League affords us the means to avoid the repetition of any such situation. I am one of those who believe that Great Britain has a part to play in European and in world politics. To abdicate that rôle would be entirely unworthy of the historic traditions of our race. Yet it is only through the League that that part can be played. Well can I understand the consistent and sometimes bitter hostility of isolationists towards the League. They understand full well that it is only through this instrument that this country can play its part. Smash it, they argue, and isolation will be inevitable. They are right. For myself, I should regard such a position for this

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country as one of selfish ignominy, but were the League to go it might well be forced upon us.

Yet those who see safety for this country in isolation are strangely deluded. Such a policy would be full of dangers for our national security, for we may be politically isolated, but we cannot be geographically isolated. Even when, in the opening years of this century, geographical isolation might still have seemed possible, political isolation was found to be impossible. An entente with France and Russia was then thought indispensable. If isolation was an impracticable policy for our country then, because its political dangers were so evident, how much greater must those dangers be today in a crowded world in which we jostle one another continuously? . . .

Let us consider for a moment the broader aspect of international affairs. At present we are in a period of evolution. The nations are striving to create a system of collective security by means of which they hope that they can outlaw war. That task must oftentimes be arduous. Yet I know of none more appealing in its essence to one who has the happiness of mankind at heart. We have been in recent weeks engaged in a General Election campaign. Whatever our party politics, what has been the ultimate object of all our efforts? Surely just this: To increase the happiness and prosperity of all sections of the community. There can be no other objective for all true political endeavour. Yet is it not clear to each one of us that the maintenance of peace is the first condition of all progress. . . .

So let us not lose heart. International understanding is not easy to promote. There are so many barriers of race and creed and prejudice, while memory is often a formidable obstacle to goodwill. Yet whatever the outcome of our pres-

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ent troubles, I am convinced of this: the nations are striving to move, even though at times with halting steps, into an era when they will understand each other, when mutual comprehension will allay suspicion, when with a sense of greater confidence we shall all seek to work together for the maintenance of peace. In that work our country has a great part to play. I am sure it is your wish, as it is mine, that she should play it fully and honourably until the end.

DEATH OF KING GEORGE V

His Majesty King George V died on the morning of 21st January 1936. At a special meeting of the Council of the League, which was in session at Geneva at the time, the representatives of every State Member of the Council paid tribute to his memory and expressed sympathy with the British people. Mr. Eden, who had been appointed Foreign Secretary in succession to Sir Samuel Hoare in December 1935, replied on behalf of His Majesty's Government.

AS the representative of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, I wish to express to my fellow members of the Council our deep appreciation of their expressions of sympathy on the occasion of the death of our beloved Sovereign George V. The Council will forgive the emotion with which I speak. To every one of his many millions of subjects throughout the world, the death of His Majesty has brought a sense of heavy loss; to those whose proud duty it has been to serve him, a deep and intimate sorrow.

We live in a time of storm and stress. We tread warily on shifting sands. But to us, in my country, there has been one sure rock—the personality of our King. Through all these troublous years he has stood, the symbol of all that we respect, the epitome of those qualities to which we as Englishmen aspire. Now he has left us. We mourn him deeply and sincerely. For we feel that we have lost in him, not merely the ruler, but the father of his people. He is dead, but he will live on in the hearts of his loyal and faithful subjects.

DEATH OF KING GEORGE V

From you, this great Council of the nations, my country has today received warm and generous sympathy. We mourn and you have mourned with us. For the words which you have spoken, for the sympathy that you have expressed, I tender to you, on behalf of the British people, our sincere and heartfelt thanks.

GERMANY REOCCUPIES THE RHINELAND

In January 1936 the League considered the imposition of further sanctions against Italy, including an oil embargo, but agreement upon this issue could not be reached.

On 7th March German troops reoccupied the Rhineland.

On 9th March Mr. Eden replied to Mr. Attlee's request for information about the action of the German Government in sending troops into the Rhineland.

THE answer is a long one, but I feel sure that the House would wish for the fullest possible information. On 6th March I asked the German Ambassador to come and see me at the Foreign Office, and I made to him a proposal which His Majesty's Ambassador in Berlin had made to the German Chancellor on 13th December last that the Powers signatory of the Treaty of Locarno should proceed with the negotiation of an air pact. The House will recall that such a pact was suggested during the course of the Anglo-French conversations held in London in February 1935. On this occasion I reminded His Excellency of the hopes which Herr Hitler himself has expressed for the betterment of international relations in Western Europe, and I told him that it seemed to me the time had now come when a real effort must be made to translate these hopes into facts, and attempt to achieve a real improvement in the relations of the United Kingdom, France, and Germany.

I pointed out to the Ambassador that the air pact touched what was in some respects a point of junction, and a sensi-

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tive point of junction, in the relations of the three great Western Powers, and His Majesty's Government considered that the conclusion of such a pact would constitute a stabilizing element in our relations in the West. I did not feel that it was impossible to negotiate such a pact even while the situation was complicated by the Italo-Abyssinian war, and I asked the Ambassador to communicate with his Government at once in this sense. I added that His Majesty's Government were genuinely anxious to convert into practical resolutions the sentiments so often expressed in speeches.

The German Ambassador came to see me on the morning of 7th March and informed me that he had a communication of very great importance to make. He then handed to me a Memorandum, of which he read a translation, and the English text of this Memorandum is now available in the Vote Office. I do not therefore propose to give the House a full account of this Memorandum, but I should like to draw attention to certain salient points in it. The Memorandum falls into two parts. In the first part the German Government have developed at considerable length their objections to the Franco-Soviet Pact and the reasons why, in their view, the intention of the French Government to conclude this pact has created an entirely new situation and destroyed the political system of the Locarno Treaty. The German Government hold that for these reasons the Locarno Treaty has ceased in practice to exist, and that Germany consequently regards herself for her part as no longer bound by this no longer valid Treaty. The Memorandum then announces that the German Government has restored the full and unrestricted sovereignty of Germany in the demilitarized zone of the Rhineland.

The second part of the Memorandum contains a series of

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proposals which are described as being designed to promote the establishment of a system of peaceful security for Europe. These proposals are, first, that a demilitarized zone should be created on both sides of the Franco-German and Belgian-German frontiers; secondly, that non-aggression pacts for twenty-five years should be concluded between Germany, France, and Belgium, and that Great Britain and Italy should guarantee these pacts; thirdly, that the Netherlands might be invited to join this Treaty system; fourthly, that these security arrangements should be supplemented by an air pact; fifthly, that non-aggression pacts should be concluded between Germany and the States bordering Germany on the East similar to the agreement between Germany and Poland, the exception previously made in regard to Lithuania being conditionally withdrawn. Finally, it is stated that Germany is willing to re-enter the League of Nations now that equality of rights and the restoration of her full sovereignty over the entire German territory has been attained. In this latter connection the German Government express the expectation that in the course of a reasonable period the question of colonial equality of rights and of the separation of the League Covenant from the Treaty of Versailles may be settled through friendly negotiation.

On receiving this communication from the German Ambassador I told His Excellency that he could not expect me to make any detailed observations on a document of this importance until I had had an opportunity to study it and to consult my colleagues on the situation which it created. At the same time I told His Excellency that there was one observation which I must make at once. I deeply regretted the information which the Ambassador had given me about the action which the German Government was taking in

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respect of the demilitarized zone. The Ambassador would appreciate that this amounted to the unilateral repudiation of a treaty freely negotiated and freely signed.

I had a clear recollection of the statement that the Chancellor had made to me at our first meeting in Berlin on the subject of the Treaty of Locarno, when he had drawn a clear distinction between that Treaty and the Treaty of Versailles and emphasized that Germany had freely signed the Treaty of Locarno. I was aware—I said to the Ambassador—of the view of the German Government as to the effect of the Franco-Soviet Pact on the Locarno Treaty. That view was not, however, shared by the other signatories of the Treaty, and if the German Government, despite the opinions of the other signatories, still maintained their own conclusion, then there was the proper arbitration procedure available for their use. I feared that the effect of the unilateral repudiation of this Treaty upon His Majesty's Government and upon British public opinion must inevitably be deplorable.

As to the later parts of the Ambassador's communication, I said that His Majesty's Government would have carefully to consider these, but clearly the declaration in respect of Germany's attitude towards the League was most important. The Ambassador at this point informed me that the German Government's decision in regard to the League was to a large extent due to their desire to meet the views frequently expressed by the Prime Minister and myself when we emphasized that the policy of His Majesty's Government was based upon the League and upon collective security. Germany, he said, was willing to share in such a policy and there were no conditions attached to her return to the League; Germany was willing to re-enter the League of Nations. While the German Government expected that in

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due time the Covenant would be divorced from the Treaty of Versailles and the question of colonial equality of rights would be settled, these were not conditions but matter for negotiation subsequent to Germany's return to the League. I do not need to emphasize the importance of the communication from the German Government of which I have given the House an account. Similar memoranda have been communicated to the other signatories of the Locarno Treaty, namely, France, Italy, and Belgium.

Before passing on to observations of a more general nature, it may be well for me to inform the House of the steps which are to be taken in the immediate future. The French and Belgian Governments, with the full knowledge and agreement of His Majesty's Government, have asked that the Council of the League of Nations may be summoned as soon as possible to consider the situation. I must emphasize that the Council of the League is the proper body for this purpose. The Council will, it is understood, meet on Friday next, and no decision can, of course, be reached in advance of that meeting, but an exchange of views will take place in Paris tomorrow between the representatives of the four Locarno Powers, other than Germany, and these conversations will be resumed at Geneva on the following day. His Majesty's Government will be represented at these conversations by the Lord Privy Seal and myself. I have now given the House an account of recent events, together with some comment upon them. I have also given the House such details as are in my possession of the procedure to be followed in the immediate future.

But honourable Members will no doubt expect to receive some immediate indication of the ideas and intentions with which the representatives of His Majesty's Government must

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approach at Geneva a problem the development of which is as yet in some important respects obscure. It is clearly desirable to do this, for no one can fail to realize the stabilizing force of a clear-sighted and united British opinion in the affairs of Europe at this juncture. Let us not delude ourselves. The course taken by the German Government in unilaterally repudiating obligations into which they have freely entered and in simultaneously acting as if they did not exist both complicates and aggravates the international situation. The abrogation of the Locarno Treaty and the occupation of the demilitarized zone have profoundly shaken confidence in any engagement into which the Government of Germany may in future enter. There can be no one in this House or this country who would wish to condone or excuse such a step. It strikes a severe blow at that principle of the sanctity of treaties which underlies the whole structure of international relations.

There is, I am thankful to say, no reason to suppose that the present German action implies a threat of hostilities. The German Government speak in their Memorandum of their "unchangeable longing for a real pacification of Europe" and express their willingness to conclude a non-aggression pact with France and Belgium. But in case there should be any misunderstanding about our position as a signatory of the Locarno Treaty, His Majesty's Government think it necessary to say that should there take place during the period which will be necessary for the consideration of the new situation which has arisen any actual attack upon France or Belgium which would constitute a violation of Article II of Locarno, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, notwithstanding the German repudiation of the Treaty, would regard themselves as in honour bound to come in

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the manner provided in the Treaty to the assistance of the country attacked.

It must be obvious to all that in existing circumstances the transition from a bad past to a better future will be an arduous and hazardous enterprise. At the same time, we are not merely concerned with the past or the present; we are concerned also with the future. One of the main foundations of the peace of Western Europe has been cut away, and if peace is to be secured there is a manifest duty to rebuild. It is in that spirit that we must approach the new proposals of the German Chancellor. His Majesty's Government will examine them clear-sightedly and objectively, with a view to finding out to what extent they represent a means by which the shaken structure of peace can again be strengthened. In the present grave condition of international affairs His Majesty's Government feel that no opportunity must be missed which offers any hope of amelioration. In the anxious circumstances of the present time I feel justified in asking all sections of opinion in this House for their support in the exacting and arduous task which now confronts the combined wisdom and statesmanship of the world.

GERMANY AND LOCARNO

On 20th March 1936 Mr. Eden outlined to the House of Commons the proceedings at the meetings of the Locarno Powers and the meetings of the League Council in London.

I MUST first thank all parties in the House for the forbearance that they have shown since I last made a statement here on Monday, 9th March. That forbearance, I can assure honourable Members, has been a real help to us in the negotiations and in the work upon which we have been engaged. I recognize, however, that this willingness to refrain from pressing the representatives of His Majesty's Government for information during an admittedly very difficult negotiation has not lessened the anxiety with which the whole House views the present situation, and it is for that reason that I am taking the very first opportunity to give the House as much information as I can. Happily I am now in a position to do more than make an interim statement. I am able to announce that agreement has been reached between the representatives of France, Belgium, Italy, and ourselves on proposals to be submitted to our respective governments.

I will, with the permission of the House, now proceed to give an account of the course of the events since I last made my statement to the House on 9th March. On that same afternoon, the House may perhaps recall, my Right Honourable Friend the Lord Privy Seal and I proceeded to Paris on our way to Geneva for the purpose of holding conversations preliminary to the meeting of the Council of the League. The full difficulties of the situation were already

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apparent, and, after the preliminary discussion in Paris, it became evident that further consultation with our colleagues in the Government was necessary. In these circumstances, we suggested that convenience and expedition would be best served if not only the meeting of the four Powers signatory to the Locarno Treaties, but also the impending meeting of the League Council, were held here in London. This proposal was readily accepted by all those concerned, and the first meeting in London between the four Locarno Powers was accordingly held on Thursday, 12th March. The House will realize that from the start two wholly separate but cognate sets of discussions have been taking place in London, one between the Locarno Powers and the other before the Council.

The immediate task of the Council was a relatively simple one. It was called upon to pronounce a finding on the question whether the action of the German Government in sending troops into the demilitarized zone on 7th March constituted a unilateral repudiation of its Treaty obligations. The course of the Council proceedings has been made public from day to day, and the House will be already aware that on 19th March this question was answered affirmatively and unanimously by the Council. A dissenting vote was recorded by the German representative, and it may be well if I here say something of the events which preceded his arrival in London. As soon as the appeal of the French and Belgian Governments with regard to Germany's violation of the Treaty of Locarno was received by the League, the Secretary-General sent an intimation of the date, at which the Council would meet to consider this question, to the members of the League and also to the German Government. To this intimation no reply was received from the German Govern-

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ment. It was, however, thought highly desirable that Germany should be represented at these grave deliberations, and have an opportunity of stating her case on equal terms before a vote was taken. On this basis a further definite invitation was sent, and I was glad to be able to second this invitation both to the German Ambassador here in London and through His Majesty's Ambassador in Berlin. This invitation the German Government accepted and the German Delegation reached London on 18th March. The session of the Council in London has not been terminated by the decision reached yesterday. It is anticipated that a further meeting will be held on Monday, and I may add that the Committee of Thirteen may meet tomorrow to consider the replies of the two parties in the Italo-Abyssinian dispute.

I will now give the House some account of the discussions between the Locarno Powers. These, as the House will readily understand, have been both long and complicated, and have filled to overflowing the brief time at our disposal. On our side the discussions have been carried on, in the main, by the Lord President of the Council, the Lord Privy Seal, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and myself. It was clear from the outset that the occupation of the demilitarized zone by German troops presented a *fait accompli* which made the opening of negotiations with Germany very difficult. It was strongly held that negotiations could not begin until this breach of international law had been in some measure restored. Immediately on my return from Paris, therefore, I suggested to the German Government that they should make a contribution to ease the situation created by their action. The suggestion was, briefly, that pending negotiations they should withdraw troops in sufficient number to warrant their description of the re-occupation as symbolic,

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and that, similarly, they should abstain from the construction of fortifications. Though the German Chancellor publicly expressed his willingness not further to increase the number of troops sent in, this was not sufficient to enable much progress to be made. The discussions between the four Locarno Powers which were resumed on 12th March, were most actively pursued thereafter. The time at our disposal in these crowded days was limited, and the discussions have had to be carried on at all hours of the day and into the small hours of the morning. I should like here to pay, if I may, a warm tribute to the energy, patience, and equanimity of the representatives of our fellow signatories.

I will now give the House some particulars of the proposals which have resulted from these conversations. These proposals contain considerable detail, and I can, therefore, only now give a very general summary. The full text will be available in the Vote Office when I sit down. The main objective of His Majesty's Government is to restore confidence in international law and create conditions in which an effort may be made to rebuild European stability. That has been our objective throughout these days. The restoration of confidence is no easy task, for it has been rudely shaken. Our main difficulty, therefore, has been to bridge the gap in time which will be necessary to enable negotiations for the re-establishment of a system of security in Europe to be effectually undertaken and carried to a conclusion.

During the interim period which I have described it is proposed that Germany should be invited to refer to the Permanent Court of International Justice at The Hague her case as to the incompatibility between the Franco-Soviet Pact and the Treaty of Locarno. It is also proposed, with

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the assent of the governments concerned, that an international force including detachments from the armies of the guarantor Powers should be stationed in a narrow zone to the east of the frontier, between Germany and France and Germany and Belgium. It is also proposed that Germany should undertake, during this interim period, not to reinforce the troops which have already been sent into the demilitarized zone, and not to modify the situation of the para-military forces which are stationed there. Germany is also asked not to proceed with fortifications there during this interim period, while the French and Belgian Governments, for their part, would undertake during the same period not to send further troops into the zone adjoining their frontiers with Germany. For our part, in addition to undertaking to supply detachments to an international force, we are making a contribution to the restoration of confidence by joining in a reaffirmation of our Locarno obligations, and by arranging for contacts between the general staffs of the guarantor Powers and those of France and Belgium. I need hardly say that the sole object of these conversations would be to meet the possibility of any unprovoked aggression.

It is proposed to submit to the Council of the League of Nations certain resolutions reaffirming, on the lines of the Resolution adopted by the Council of the League a year ago, after the Stresa meeting, the principle of scrupulous respect for Treaty obligations, proposing the reference to the Permanent Court of International Justice which I have just mentioned and taking note of the reaffirmation which Belgium, France, Italy, and ourselves propose to make of their rights and obligations under the Treaty of Locarno. The Council would also take note of the contemplated

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measures to which I have referred, and which relate to the interim period. The House will, I venture to think, consider that these proposed arrangements to create a sense of security during the period of negotiations are fair and reasonable, and indicate the spirit in which the question has been approached by the French and Belgian Governments. Germany is asked to make certain contributions, but, in the situation which has been created by the German re-occupation of the demilitarized zone, I am sure the House will feel that it is very reasonable to ask Germany to make contributions. More particularly is this so in the light of the substantial contributions which resulted from the restraint and moderation displayed by the French and Belgian Governments. If the House will appreciate the position of those governments when we first met in Paris, and then compare that with the text of the White Paper, they will appreciate how substantial that contribution has been.

As regards the actual negotiations, what is proposed is that in the first instance the five signatories of Locarno should enter into negotiations on the basis, first, of several of the proposals, made in the German Memorandum of 7th March; secondly, of the revision of the status of the Rhineland; and, thirdly, of the drawing up of mutual assistance pacts open to all the signatories of the Treaty of Locarno.

The next stage of negotiation is a World Conference to be held under the auspices of the League of Nations, to consider, in addition to certain other proposals made by the German Chancellor, the questions of security and the limitation of armaments and of economic relations between the nations. Finally, since it is unfortunately necessary, however reluctant we may be to do so, to envisage the possibility of the failure of the proposed negotiations which I have de-

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scribed to the House, it is proposed that His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and the Government of Italy should address letters to the Governments of France and of Belgium indicating what their position in that event would be. The House will find the terms of these proposed letters in the White Paper.

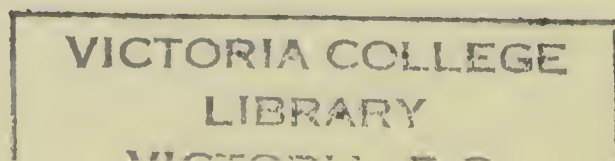
Such are the proposals which, after strenuous negotiations, have been referred to our respective governments. I hope that the House will agree that they are not ill designed to meet the present grave emergency. So far as His Majesty's Government are concerned, we are prepared to accept these proposals, and it is our most earnest hope that the German Government will also look on them in this light. The German Government have stressed their wish for a relaxation of that tension which can only lead to disaster. It is now for them to show what contributions they are willing to make to this end. Last night I asked Herr von Ribbentrop, the German representative, to come and see me, when I gave him a brief outline of these proposals. His Excellency at once stated that he would take no decision until he had seen the text as a whole, and completely reserved the position of his Government. Late last night I sent to Herr von Ribbentrop the text as soon as it had been approved by the Cabinet.

Such is the present position as it has emerged as a result of this week's intensive efforts. I would stress that in the conversations between the Locarno Powers which have taken place, the object of His Majesty's Government has been two-fold throughout: We have sought to meet the peril—it has been a very real peril—of an immediate and gravely critical international situation, and we have sought to create an opportunity for the settlement of Western Europe on a firm

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and enduring foundation.—[An HON. MEMBER: “And also in Eastern Europe?”]—In both.—[*Interruption.*]—In the first instance, but not exclusively. In both these arduous tasks we have, we believe, made important progress in the last few days. I can assure the House that the Government will persist without any relaxation in their endeavours.

MR. ATTLEE: The House will have listened with the deepest interest to the statement made by the Foreign Secretary. I think it has been the endeavour of all of us not to embarrass him and his colleagues, during this very difficult time, in his most responsible task. It is quite clear that these matters cannot be fully debated this afternoon, but an opportunity for discussion will perhaps arise next week. I would like just to make one or two points. In the first place I should like to say how much we recognize the statesmanlike moderation of both France and Belgium; and, secondly, I would like to emphasize the importance we attach to going forward to a world conference to deal with the widest possible issues. I take it that the Right Honourable Gentleman did not intend to suggest that peace would be secured merely by a western settlement, but that he would agree that we must try to secure the peace of all Europe and of the whole world; and I would specially welcome the reference to the fact that discussions are to proceed also on the wide economic causes which, we hold, lie at the back of this unrest. I should like to ask two questions. The first is whether the Right Honourable Gentleman would state a little more fully the contents of the letters which, he stated, are to be sent by His Majesty's Government and the Italian Government to France and Belgium; and the second is, whether he has as yet any indication of the attitude of the German Government to these proposals?



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MR. EDEN: I think it would be too early to answer the Right Honourable Gentleman's last question, but I must of course make it quite clear that my reference to Western Europe was only in connection with the efforts which we must make to replace the Locarno Treaty, which is a treaty concerned with Western Europe. In addition, I think my statement made it quite plain that our objective is very much wider than that. As to the exchange of letters, the White Paper will be available to the House, and I confess that, unless the House would wish me to do so, I should be rather reluctant to try to summarize them. I should be prepared to read them but I think that honourable Members would prefer to read them for themselves.

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In the House of Commons on 26th March 1936 Mr. Eden further explained the Government's foreign policy and defended the "Text of Proposals" drawn up in London on 19th March by the representatives of Belgium, France, the United Kingdom and Italy. This "Text of Proposals" will be found on page 340.

I SHOULD like my first sentence this afternoon to be one expressing to all parties in this House, and to the Press and the people of this country as a whole, the Government's sincere and grateful thanks for the restraint which they have shown during a most anxious international period, a restraint, if I may say so, which is all the more remarkable in that it was assumed and maintained on a purely voluntary basis. Perhaps if the same conditions of liberty of the Press and speech, and the same distinction between liberty and licence, were today observed throughout Europe, we should not now be confronted with the problems which unfortunately beset us.

This afternoon I stand here to give an account on my behalf and on that of the Government of our stewardship during the recent critical international situation. If in doing that I should depart somewhat, as I shall, from the usual formal restraint in speeches on international affairs, I shall justify myself in so doing because what I have to say is in the main spoken, not to nations overseas, but to the people of my own country. It is imperative in the present international situation that this country should visualize its prob-

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lems in a true perspective. We can only do that if I as Foreign Secretary speak frankly.

We must distinguish between what may be national sentiment and what are, for good or ill, our national obligations. Likely enough, there may be many people in this country who say to themselves now, "In our judgement the territories of France and Germany should be treated on exactly equal terms." It may be that people feel that, but those are not the terms of the Treaty of Locarno. Those are not the terms of the Treaty of which we are guarantors and which has formed a main element in the security of Western Europe for the last ten years.

If I put the matter in this way, it is because I believe there is a special responsibility on this country at this time, and I want to begin to try and place matters in their true perspective by giving the House a brief account of the origins of this demilitarized zone, for I do not believe that they are generally appreciated. What happened was this. After the War the original French aim was to guarantee the security of France by the separation of the Rhineland provinces from the rest of Germany. The French Government were persuaded to abandon that position, and, if I may say so, rightly persuaded, by means of an arrangement comprising three things, namely, a fifteen years' occupation of the zone itself, the permanent demilitarization of the zone, and, most important of all, a guarantee of security from ourselves and the United States of America. In actual fact, that guarantee was never forthcoming. The United States failed to ratify, and, since our ratification was dependent upon theirs, that guarantee came to nothing. It is important that it should be realized that that was the most important element in inducing the then French Government to give up the demand

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for the separation of the Rhineland provinces from Germany.

Then the demilitarized zone was embodied in the Treaty of Versailles. It forms Articles 42 and 43 of that Treaty. There were time-limits to certain provisions of that Treaty, notably in respect of the occupation of the Rhineland. That actually came to an end before the time had expired, but there was no time-limit for this demilitarized zone. It was, in fact, under the Treaty an enduring undertaking. I say that—and I know the Right Honourable Gentleman the Member for Carnarvon Boroughs [Mr. Lloyd George] will believe me—in no spirit of criticism at all. I myself never criticized the Versailles Treaty and our part in it, because I had some appreciation of the difficulties in which it must have been negotiated. All I would say to the House, and more particularly to the Right Honourable Gentleman, is that he too would appreciate our difficulties in facing a situation for which we are not all of us on this bench responsible. He is one of the few to whom it has been given in history—and we are happy to note it—to have the proud position of being able to criticize his own legacy to history.

I will turn from the place of the zone in the Treaty of Versailles to its place in the Treaty of Locarno. The House may imagine that this zone forms part of the Treaty of Locarno because from the outset France and Belgium clamantly demanded it. That is not the position at all. This demand for the demilitarized zone figured in the original demand put forward by Germany, who herself initiated the conversations which led to the signature of the Locarno Treaty. It figured from the start in the original German proposals, and I do not think it is very difficult, looking back, to see why that was. The Locarno Treaty was signed

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not very long after the Ruhr, and it would not be astonishing if the German Government of that day reflected that some guarantee from us in those conditions would be of service to her.

What has happened since? Successive governments in Germany, in France, and in this country have reaffirmed Locarno. The present Chancellor of the German Reich has reaffirmed it, and other German spokesmen have done the same. We have heard much, more particularly since the advent of the present régime in Germany, about the *diktat* of Versailles, but nobody has ever heard of the *diktat* of Locarno. It is hard to conceive how such a phrase could be used of a Treaty which it has been admitted on all sides was freely negotiated and freely signed. Nor is that all. If Germany wished, as she was clearly entitled to wish, to modify any part of this Treaty, negotiations were open to her. Germany has claimed, as she has from her own point of view every right to claim if she believes it to be true, that the Franco-Soviet Pact is inconsistent with the Locarno Treaty, but I would draw the attention of the House in that connection to Article 3 of the Locarno Treaty which specifically provides for just such a contingency. Under that Article "Germany and Belgium and Germany and France undertake to settle by peaceful means and in the manner laid down herein all questions of every kind which may arise between them. . . ." Germany was, therefore, clearly bound, under the terms of the Treaty, to settle this question by the methods which the Treaty made available. The French Government made it clear that they were willing to go to the Hague Court. The German Government regard that Court as unsuitable, but if it is not suitable it is only fair to point out that the Franco-German Arbitration Treaty

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signed between the two countries expressly provides that even legal questions can, by agreement, be submitted to a permanent conciliation commission which that agreement sets up. That might have been—I am not arguing it—the appropriate method for Germany to use. She did not use it. The German Government ignored Article 3 of the Treaty and decided for themselves that the Franco-Soviet Pact was incompatible with the Treaty of Locarno, and decided moreover that that incompatibility entitled Germany to regard the whole of the Locarno Treaty as non-existent.

I would now like to say a word about the position of one country whose relations to the events of the last few weeks have not perhaps been wholly appreciated by the people of this country. I refer to Belgium. Germany's case is that the Franco-Soviet Pact conflicts with Locarno. But Belgium has signed no Pact with Soviet Russia, and more than half this zone runs along the Belgian frontier—the frontier of a country which has suffered more than any other, except perhaps Poland, as the battle-ground of Europe. Is it surprising, in these conditions, that there should be deep anxiety in Belgium today? I would like to pay my warmest tribute to the cool courage and constructive statesmanship of M. van Zeeland, the Prime Minister of Belgium. To sum up, then, this earlier part of what I wish to say to the House: I believe it to be the judgement of this country that even those in this country who think that Germany has a strong case deprecate the fact that she has chosen to present it by force and not by reason.

Now I want to say something about the position of our own country. There are some who may regard us as freely and fortunately placed at this anxious moment in European affairs, some who regard us as arbiters with a fortunate des-

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tiny. But we are not arbiters in this business; that is not so. We are guarantors of this Treaty, and as guarantors, for good or ill—I am not arguing that—we have certain commitments and they are very definite. I will draw the attention of the House to Article 4 of the Locarno Treaty. It runs as follows:

“If one of the high contracting parties alleges that a violation of Article 2 of the present Treaty or a breach of Articles 42 or 43 of the Treaty of Versailles has been or is being committed, it shall bring the question at once before the Council of the League of Nations.”

That has been done—

“As soon as the Council of the League of Nations is satisfied that such violation or breach has been committed, it will notify its findings without delay to the Powers signatory of the present Treaty, who severally agree that in such case they will each of them come immediately to the assistance of the Power against whom the act complained of is directed.”

Those words are clear. It cannot be said, in the light of them, that we are uncommitted and free arbiters. Our position is far different, and I want in all bluntness to make this plain to the House—I am not prepared to be the first British Foreign Secretary to go back on a British signature. And yet our objective throughout this difficult period has been to seek a peaceful and an agreed solution. I consider that we are bound to do so by Article 7 of the Locarno Treaty itself, which states:

“The present Treaty, which . . . is in conformity with the Covenant of the League of Nations, shall not be interpreted as restricting the duty of the League to take whatever

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action may be deemed wise and effectual to safeguard the peace of the world."

It is in the spirit of that Article that we have sought conciliation and attempted to bring about agreement and understanding, and to do that without impairing confidence in our good faith or in our determination to carry out the obligations to which we have set our name. I do not pretend that our task would not have been easier had we been entirely free. That does not rise. We have entered upon our task with the weight of these commitments heavy upon us.

It was under these conditions that the Powers met in Paris a short while ago. There is no secret about the position which the French and Belgian Governments then took up. They stated that it would not be possible for them to negotiate with Germany unless some action were taken to show that the validity of international agreements was being upheld. When we asked, how did they propose that that should be done, the French Government told us that in their view it was necessary that Germany should withdraw her troops from a zone which she had entered contrary to the obligations of a Treaty she had signed. When we asked how that was to be brought about if Germany were to refuse, it was replied to us that if withdrawal could not be otherwise arranged it must be brought about by progressive pressure, beginning with financial and economic sanctions. We did not take that view. We neither denied the gravity of the breach of the Treaty which had been committed nor the consequences to Europe, but we thought it our imperative duty to seek by negotiation to restore confidence. That being our objective from the very first hour of this critical fortnight, we have sought throughout to rebuild. But—we must face this fact—it is not possible to rebuild unless your

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foundations can be well and truly laid, and your foundations cannot be well and truly laid if some of those engaged in the task believe that the building will ultimately share the fate of its predecessor. It has been our task to create an atmosphere of confidence in which these negotiations could take place. Those, broadly, were the points of view at the outset.

We thought, the Lord Privy Seal and I thought, that in the condition of this present phase of international affairs it would be a wise step to attempt to induce our colleagues to move the scene of negotiations from Paris to London. They concurred, and as a result the meetings of the Council and of the Locarno Powers took place in this city. There were many days of anxious and even critical negotiation. The crux of our problem was always the same, how was international law to be vindicated? How were we to bridge, as we ourselves are most anxious to bridge, this difficult interim period before negotiations could begin? The White Paper contains three proposals to that end. It asks Germany to do three things: To bring the dispute as to the relation of the Franco-Soviet Pact to the Locarno Treaty before the Hague Court; to suspend fortification of the zone; and to agree to an international force for the interim period.

I would say to anyone in this House who considers those requests severe to remember the point from which we started in Paris, to remember the request which was made then, a request which could quite consistently and properly be made within the terms of the Treaty itself. I must make it plain that these proposals have always been proposals. They are not an ultimatum, still less a *diktat*. If an international force were the difficulty, and if the German Government could offer some other constructive proposals to take its place, His

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Majesty's Government will be quite ready to go to the other Powers interested and try to secure agreement upon them; but it must be appreciated that without some constructive contribution from the German side the task of those whose sole aim and ambition is to start these negotiations will be an almost impossible one.

Now I would say a word or two about the White Paper itself, and more particularly about our own undertakings as set out in that Paper. Those undertakings come into force at three different stages. There are the undertakings which relate to the immediate situation, pending negotiations; there are the undertakings which we are prepared to contribute as part of the general settlement which we hope to bring about in the negotiations; and there are, finally, the undertakings which we are prepared to give in the event of a breakdown of negotiations. I want to take first and to explain to the House the undertaking given for the interim period, which is in Paragraph III of the White Paper. It says: "Declare that nothing that has happened before or since the said breach of the Treaty of Locarno . . ." and so forth. That undertaking in Paragraph III is deliberately designed to compensate for the loss of security suffered by France and Belgium at this time owing to the violation of the demilitarized zone. The first part of that paragraph repeats the statement which I made to this House—the very first statement I made after the breach of the Treaty took place. The undertaking is strictly limited and it is clearly defined. The staff conversations are only for the purpose of obligations under the Locarno Treaty. They are purely technical conversations. They can in no measure increase our political obligations—in no measure. We shall ask, and, indeed, insist, that some such paragraph as this shall be the

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understanding upon which those conversations take place: "It is understood that this contact does not imply any political undertaking or any obligation as regards defence organization between the two parties." I do not anticipate any great difficulty in securing this undertaking, because, as it happens, those very words are drawn from an agreement between Belgium and France. I think we must distinguish, and clearly distinguish, between staff conversations for a specific and limited purpose now and those conversations in the years before 1914. Before 1914 we had no political commitments. Consequently the staff conversations inevitably entailed a political commitment, though they might be military. [HON. MEMBERS: "No!"] Well, that is the fear that many people had.

MR. CHURCHILL: Every military agreement was preluded by a disclaimer of political significance.

MR. EDEN: Whether that be accepted or denied, I do not think the House will disagree that it was a general fear widely shown. My point is that whether that fear was justified or not it cannot arise in the present instance, because our obligations in the present instance are clearly set out by Treaty already, and the only question that can be at issue is whether or not you are prepared to make arrangements to carry out those obligations should the need arise. That is all. I would remind the House in this connection that only in the last few months such conversations have actually taken place, on that occasion at our request, in connection with obligations under the Covenant which we all shared and which had arisen out of a dispute in another part of the world.

So much for the interim period. At this stage I want to say one word to those who would argue that it is our duty

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at this time to keep free from all entanglements in Europe. With respect, I wonder whether those who say that are quite clear about what they mean. If they mean we must turn a blind eye to all that happens in Europe, I say that is to take no account at all of realities. We have never been able in all our history to dissociate ourselves from events in the Low Countries, neither in the time of Queen Elizabeth, nor in the time of Marlborough, nor in the time of Napoleon, and still less at the present day, when modern developments of science have brought striking force so much nearer to our shores. It is a vital interest of this country that the integrity of France and Belgium should be maintained and that no hostile force should cross their frontiers. The truth is, and I say it with apologies to my Right Honourable Friend the Member for West Birmingham [Sir A. Chamberlain], there was nothing very new in Locarno.

SIR AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: Hear, hear!

MR. EDEN: It was a new label, but it was an old fact, and that fact has been the underlying purpose of British foreign policy throughout history. To affirm it again is a threat to no one, for its purpose is purely defensive, and in every single Article where these conversations are mentioned it is clearly shown that they only apply in a case of unprovoked aggression. I hope that those conditions will never arise, but I am quite confident that they are much less likely to arise if we make quite clear our own position. What Locarno did was to carry a stage further commitments which we already bore under the Covenant in respect of a much wider area. It was not, of course, inconsistent with the Covenant, but complementary to it, and, in fact, the idea of these regional pacts has been blessed by Geneva.

But it may be that those who urge that we should disen-

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tangle ourselves from Europe have something in mind rather different, or very different, from what I have just described. They may be thinking of another situation when, owing to obligations elsewhere, our neighbours may become involved in conflict and may call for help in a quarrel that is not ours. That I believe to be a general apprehension. The people of this country are determined that that shall not happen, and that is the view of the Government. We agree with it entirely. Our obligations are world-wide obligations, are the obligations of the Covenant, and we stand firm in support of them, but we do not add, nor will we add, one jot to those obligations, except in the area already covered by the Locarno Treaty. Let us make our position on that absolutely clear. We accept no obligations beyond those shared by the League except the obligations which devolve on us from Locarno.

Now I come to the second set of undertakings in this Paper. Those are the undertakings we are prepared to enter into with a view to securing, if we can, a final settlement of this troubled European situation. They are to be found in Paragraph VII of this White Paper. Briefly put, the scheme is that there should be, as suggested by the German Chancellor, a number of non-aggression pacts, that in Western Europe these non-aggression pacts should be guaranteed by Britain and Italy. That is the German Chancellor's scheme; but, over and above that, in our own proposals there will be pacts of mutual assistance between the Powers of Western Europe which would differ from Locarno in this, that the guarantees would be reciprocal, and that we should share with others in the guarantees as well as in the risks. Those mutual-assistance pacts would, of course, be open to all the signatories of Locarno. I am talking now of

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the permanent settlement we wish to reach, not of the temporary arrangement to restore confidence open to all the signatories, including Germany. Those would be supplemented by staff conversations on exactly the same lines and with the same limitations as I have stressed before. The general scheme of this central part of our proposal is very much like the scheme of the air pact which has been under discussion for some time past.

Finally, I come to the position with which we should be faced if negotiations were to fail. The House may say, "Why do you want at this stage to visualize failure? Why was it necessary, in trying to start negotiations, to contemplate failure?" The answer is a simple one. If we were to ask the Powers, as we do ask in this document, who enjoy guarantees under Locarno to come into a conference where we should seek to make a new scheme of security for Europe they would surely be entitled to turn round and say: "That is all very well, but what if those negotiations break down? Are we left without Locarno and without anything at all?" That was a situation which clearly had to be met, and it was to meet it that this draft letter was proposed. This letter contains two undertakings. The first, in paragraph (b) is that the Powers concerned

"Will immediately come to the assistance of your Government, in accordance with the Treaty of Locarno, in respect of any measures which shall be jointly decided upon."

That paragraph adds nothing to the obligations of Locarno except the word "jointly," which is clearly of considerable importance to us. Paragraph (c) contains two most important elements to which I would draw the attention of the House. It only applies to the event of an unprovoked aggression, and the assurances which it gives are strictly

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reciprocal, that is to say they are dependent upon the receipt of reciprocal assurances from Belgium and from France. The staff conversations visualized in paragraph (d) are again under the same limited conditions as apply in Paragraph III of this White Paper.

To sum up, then, the position of our engagements: Except in respect of the parts of Europe covered by our Locarno obligations, our obligations are precisely the same as those of any other member of the League of Nations. Even in respect of the area covered by the Locarno Treaty there is no new commitment, but only arrangements for the more effectual fulfilment of commitments which already exist. We have visualized these not because they necessarily appeal to us, but because we think it imperative to make some contribution to try to secure negotiations to solve our present difficulties. I freely admit that it is not impossible to find faults with this White Paper—I could find a few myself—but I have given the House the reasons for it. In the circumstances of that time I say, deliberately, that I regret not one of these proposals, because the House must recall that we were met together in circumstances as grave as those that have faced any Governments since the War. The international position was extremely complicated. Few people in this country yet realize the immense significance to certain parts of Europe of that demilitarized zone. There were latent dangers which are not yet wholly appreciated. Our justification for these proposals lies simply in this, that at a moment of crisis they allayed the immediate prospects of steps being taken which might have led to war. They earned us a breathing space and we have now concluded the first phase of our efforts to preserve peace in a situation of difficulty which we have done nothing ourselves to create. My justi-

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fication for this White Paper, and the Government's justification, is that no less than peace was in the balance when these meetings took place. If the House will weigh the danger of war against this document, I am convinced that their judgment will be the same as that of the Government—that it was worth while.

Of all these proposals, the one to which we attach most importance is the one which opens up opportunities for new negotiations. That is the phase we want to reach. If we are to reach it, as I said, we must have a contribution from the German Government. So far, despite all our efforts, and they have been many, none has been forthcoming, save the Chancellor's undertaking not to increase the number of troops that originally entered the zone. While admitting the importance of that, quite frankly, in the present international situation it is not enough. If, in addition to that, the German Government would give an undertaking that for the period of negotiations it would not fortify the zone, that would give us something to work upon, but I am informed that it is not possible for the German Government to give even that undertaking.

Our objectives in all this are threefold—first, to avert the danger of war; second, to create conditions in which negotiations can take place; and third, to bring about the success of those negotiations so that they may strengthen collective security, further Germany's return to the League, and, in a happier atmosphere, allow those larger negotiations on economic matters and on matters of armaments which are indispensable to the appeasement of Europe to take place. I assure the House that it is the appeasement of Europe as a whole that we have constantly before us. It would not be difficult to blame the Government

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because everything that each one of us would like has not been done. It would not be difficult to blame us because some particular thing has been done that an individual critic might have preferred left undone. But such a criticism is of little value, unless it takes account of the conditions in which we have to work, of our obligations and the fact that France and Belgium on the one side and Germany on the other view these things from different angles. Some people in this country could quickly produce an agreement that would suit Germany and ourselves. Others could produce an agreement that would suit France and ourselves. But, if we are to get agreement at all, we have to get them both at a table and our objective is to get them there.

What are the chances of achieving that now? Much, clearly, depends on the proposals which the German Chancellor has been good enough to tell us he is going to make at the beginning of next week. We know that the Chancellor, who has, I believe, appreciated the efforts which the British Government have made, will understand with what anxiety Europe awaits those proposals. He can be assured, so far as we are concerned, that those proposals will be received, not only with an open mind, but with a keen desire to make the best use we can of them in order to bring about the permanent pacification of Europe. I say this all the more sincerely because we are conscious of the difficulties of our time. There is another essential condition if these conversations are to start and are to have any chance of success. We need time. We must reduce the present tempo of international exchanges and we need a calmer and quieter atmosphere in which to attempt to study these new proposals when they come next week, and

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to take stock of the general situation as we then find it. When we have those proposals, we shall need an indispensable breathing space, and any action we shall take will simply be calculated to try to steady the situation to that end.

I am approaching my concluding plea, which is addressed not only to this country. We are, I believe, only at the beginning of a period which must be, at best, one of most critical international negotiations. I do not view the future with a light heart, but there are a few general observations which I want to make and which, I think, the Foreign Secretary of this country ought to make without restraint at this time. I do not intend to approach the problem of the immediate future with the idea of being bound to the divergent policies either of France or of Germany. Our policy is the Covenant and our membership of the League. We know our obligations and we are prepared to fulfil them. But what is uppermost in my mind and what, I believe, is uppermost in the minds of the great mass of the people of this country, is that we must persist in our search for peace on an enduring foundation. If we are to achieve that we shall need help from all.

I say, first, to the British public: We cannot secure peace unless you are prepared frankly to recognize the real perplexities of the present international situation. We cannot ensure peace if you refuse to take upon yourselves obligations to assist us at this time. We cannot ensure peace, unless, in this country and elsewhere, we divest ourselves of prejudices about this or that foreign nation and unless in this country we can divest ourselves of prejudices about our own politicians. It is fantastic to suggest that we are tied to the chariot wheels of this or that foreign country. I

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would like to say to France, that we cannot ensure peace unless the French Government is ready to approach, with an open mind, the problems which still separate it from Germany. I would like to say to Germany: How can we hope to enter on negotiations with any prospect of success, unless you are prepared to do something to allay the anxieties in Europe which you have created?

If we are to bring a happy issue out of all our troubles, the British public, whose one aim is peace, whose one ambition is a European settlement, and whose one political objective is support of the League of Nations, will judge other nations by the spirit in which, and the extent to which, they co-operate with us in this task. We are conscious that the country feels deeply upon this issue. I would ask it to think deeply also. I do not believe that, at this time, we shall contribute to a solution of our difficulties by fashioning our foreign policy exclusively on that of any foreign country, but rather by seeking to understand the difficulties that exist in each and attempting to contrive a common meeting-place. That is our whole objective.

Nobody, I think, in this House will envy me my task at this time. He would be an unimaginative being indeed who did not appreciate its burden. But there is always some comfort in approaching a task the fulfilment of which, could it ever be attained, is one's keenest desire. A strengthened League of Nations, an ordered Europe, a greater confidence in which nations would rely less on arms and more on law and order—are these things truly impossible of achievement? They are very difficult at this time, but, out of this unpromising outlook opportunities may be offered. If we are to seize them, it is imperative that as a country we should be united in policy and in

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purpose. These issues far transcend the ordinary limitations of party politics. When the whole future of our civilization may be at stake, who cares about party labels? I would ask for the continuance of that support which has been so generously extended to me in the last few weeks and I would ask it because I believe that the purpose for which I am working—with how many errors and through how many discussions—is one which is shared by the great majority of the men and women of this country. It is to maintain peace, to strengthen the League, to uphold the sanctity of treaties, and above all to seek, without respite, to fashion from the troubled present a future which may be freed from the haunting fears that shadow our own time.

THE INVITATION TO GERMANY

The first part of Mr. Eden's statement to the House of Commons, sitting in Committee, on 6th May, dealt with criticisms of His Majesty's Government's policy in regard to the Italo-Abyssinian dispute. He then proceeded to report to the Committee further developments in the situation created by German re-occupation of the Rhineland, which had not been discussed in the House since the previous speech on 26th March.

THE Committee will perhaps recollect that, when we last discussed this matter [Western Europe], just before Easter, I told the Committee that the Government were then engaged in considering the German Memorandum. We have proceeded further with that consideration, and, since the Committee last met, there has been a meeting of the Locarno Powers at Geneva. The result of that meeting was set out in a communiqué, and I would draw the attention of the Committee to three of the most important points in it. In the first place, the Powers expressed their regret that Germany had not made a contribution in respect of the temporary period such as to re-establish the confidence indispensable to the opening of the general negotiations proposed by the German Chancellor. The second point, to which we also attach great importance, is the statement in the communiqué that all opportunities of conciliation must be explored, and that, therefore, His Majesty's Government should get into touch with the German Government to elucidate a certain number of

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points in the German Memorandum. The third point was that we should meet again during the forthcoming Council session.

The honourable Gentleman asked me if I could give him information about these questions, but I think that the Committee, on reflection, will not really wish me to do so. I want these negotiations to have the best possible chance of success, and I would ask the honourable Gentleman to consider whether I should really be serving the interests of the negotiations if I were to state here the questions we are proposing to ask, before they have even reached the German Chancellor. [HON. MEMBERS: "Why not?"] Surely, the reason is clear to everyone. It is because, as a mere act of courtesy, the German Chancellor is entitled to the first receipt of questions addressed to him. I am not communicating these questions to any other government before they go to the German Government, and I am anxious that they should be in the hands of the German Chancellor before they are in the hands of anybody else.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE: I understand from what the Right Honourable Gentleman says now that they have not been submitted to other governments and, therefore, they are not a collective interrogation. They are purely questions addressed by the British Government to the German Government?

MR. EDEN: That is a very fair question. We have discussed some points in which other governments are interested, but the questions that we are putting are put on our sole authority and our sole responsibility. They have not been submitted to anybody. I hope it will be possible for His Majesty's Ambassador in Berlin to see either the Chancellor or the Foreign Minister tomorrow for the

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purpose of giving him these questions. I must emphasize that our objective in these negotiations is the same as it has been from the beginning. We want to make of a period of crisis a period of opportunity. The unilateral denunciation of the Locarno Treaty was a shock to the structure of security in Europe. It is our task to rebuild it. We have already made a certain contribution, and we do not apologize for that contribution. We propose to go on with our task, than which we believe there is none more urgent.

I cannot pretend to have made a survey of the field of foreign affairs. We are beset with other problems and other difficulties, besides those that I have touched on, at the Foreign Office at present. We are determined to do our utmost to resolve them. I do not think that we in this Committee should blind ourselves to the perils of the present time or to the active rearmament that is taking place everywhere. In fact some nations seem to be rearming to the exclusion of almost everything else in their national economy. Our course is clear, if difficult. It is to pursue by every possible means the solution of our problems, to take every opportunity to promote international agreement but at the same time to persist in our own rearmament, which has now become an indispensable element in the solution of our ills. Whatever the future of the world organization, His Majesty's Government have clearly got a great part to play. They can only do that effectively in an armed world if they have the means at their disposal. I will make one final plea. The Government welcomes—I hope we have not shown ourselves unduly sensitive to it—constructive criticism. We do not pretend for a moment to be impeccable, or to have made no mistakes, but we think it reasonable in foreign affairs to appeal for some restraint from purely

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partisan criticism, which does make the conduct of this country's foreign policy more difficult in the face of nations where no partisans are permitted. My plea, then, is for the maximum of national unity. I make it, not selfishly or in fear of criticism, but because if democracies are to survive they must be enabled to act as far as possible with equal advantage in this, at present, the most important sphere of all. Only thus can we hope to do justice to our trust in these most anxious times.

THE RE-ARMING WORLD

The set-back to peace hopes and the re-arming of the Powers were dealt with in a speech by Mr. Eden to a Conservative meeting at Leek Wootton, Warwickshire, on 6th June 1936.

WE must all of us be acutely conscious of the confused and anxious state of international affairs at this time. It is of no avail to refuse to face the facts. The League of Nations has suffered a set-back, and whenever respect for law and order is weakened then at once a number of new anxieties arise to confuse the present and to perplex the future. This is as true of international as of national affairs. In such conditions a heavy responsibility rests on members of the League of Nations and on the governments that represent them. The very fact that the League finds its authority weakened places an obligation upon all its members to examine recent events and to attempt to remedy in a spirit of candid realism the defects which those events have laid bare.

That is the task to which the Government in this country is now addressing itself. Let me, however, at once make it plain that His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom still maintain their confidence in the League as the best instrument at present available to mankind for the preservation of international peace. It is their hope and it will be their endeavour to ensure that the experience of the past few months is turned to good purpose for the future. In the meantime let us not on account of the present set-back allow ourselves to give way to despair. That would be the worst spirit in which to face our difficulties. I agree

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emphatically, if I may say so, with a recent statement of the Archbishop of Canterbury that "we could not abandon or even whittle down the ideal for which the League of Nations stood. The actual circumstances of the time might seem to have discredited it, but the ideal remains." That is profoundly true. We must at this time maintain our determination, keep the League in existence, and approach any modifications that may be necessary in its structure with the desire to make that organization as effective as possible for the maintenance of peace.

In the last resort, however, the success or failure of our efforts, of the world's efforts, to set its own house in order, will depend upon the extent to which nations are willing to forgo a spirit of aggressive nationalism and to co-operate whole-heartedly in an endeavour henceforth to settle disputes by peaceful means. In this connection it is important that we should miss no opportunity that may offer to secure by international agreement the limitation and reduction of armaments. Such an agreement is indeed the indispensable concomitant of a world political settlement. It is true that the omens for any such agreement are far from favourable at the present time. The opportunity may, however, again recur, and you may be confident that the Government are fully alive to the need for watching for it and using it.

In the meantime, however, we have responsibilities, and they are very heavy in a rapidly re-arming world, for the defence of these islands, of our trade, and of our imperial communications. In considering these responsibilities it is impossible to ignore the extent of rearmament elsewhere. That rearmament is almost everywhere formidable. In most countries it is proceeding with great rapidity and in

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some to the exclusion of almost all else in the national economy. This is the state of affairs of which it is the Government's imperative duty to take urgent account. You will have seen a reflection of the first steps which have been taken to do so in the national accounts for this year. This increased armament expenditure has involved an increase in taxation. However unpalatable that may be it is inevitable, for this country, which has itself shown an example in disarmament, can no longer continue in a state of comparative military weakness which the increased armaments of other states and the uncertainties of the international situation as a whole has rendered wholly unjustifiable.

In this connection I would refer to the appeal which has been made recently by the Secretary of State for War with regard to recruiting for the Territorial Army at the present time. The responsibilities of the Territorial Army have increased enormously of recent years. It is that army which is now solely responsible for home defence, and to carry out that duty it is clear that both coast and anti-aircraft defences must be ready to function. Never before in history has a citizen force raised by voluntary enlistment undertaken such heavy responsibility. Clearly its successful discharge can only be ensured if the endeavour is strongly supported by the Government and local authorities, by employers of labour great and small, and if it is encouraged by the public as a whole.

I am convinced that the people of this country will whole-heartedly support the programme of re-equipment upon which the Government is engaged. We, as a democracy, enjoy liberties which we hold dear, which indeed we have come to regard as the birthright of every British citizen. Yet in the world as it is today, a world which is

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not as we would wish it, we must be prepared to play our part in every sphere of national endeavour if we are to preserve those liberties and hand them on intact to our successors.

The objective of British foreign policy is the maintenance of peace, a peace which shall not be limited to one or two countries nor even to one or two continents. Such must always be our objective. Yet while our concern for peace is universal and enduring, there are clearly certain areas in which our vital interests are more immediately affected by a disturbance of the peace, and one of those areas is Western Europe. It is for that reason that, from the moment when the German re-occupation of the Rhineland took place, the Government have sought, out of the anxious and even perilous situation thus created, to seize an opportunity to re-establish international security and to re-create international confidence among the nations of Western Europe within the framework of the League. Indeed such was not only our interest but also our direct obligation. For let it not be forgotten, we are not only the signatories but the guarantors of the Locarno Treaty.

It is not necessary for me to say that we regret the method by which Germany re-occupied the Rhineland, and terminated thereby her association with her fellow signatories of the Treaty of Locarno. That has already been made clear in a number of speeches on the subject. That regret, however, does not absolve us from the task of seeking a solution for the situation created by the German Government's action, a task upon which we have in fact been engaged ever since the 7th March. We have approached the German Government for the purpose of securing a new settlement in Europe on the basis of a dis-

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appearance of the demilitarized zone in the Rhineland. His Majesty's Government made it clear at the outset that, so far as they were concerned, their obligations towards France and Belgium under the Treaty of Locarno held good, and in an endeavour to restore confidence in those countries, and the restoration of confidence is an essential condition for the successful conduct of negotiations, we agreed to conversations between the General Staffs designed to facilitate the execution of our obligations under the Locarno Treaty should the need arise. We cannot afford and we do not intend that there should be any doubt about our fulfilment of these obligations, for they affect the independence and integrity of countries which we regard, and which our forefathers before us regarded, as of vital importance to the British realm.

We have now taken up with the German Government the proposals which they originally put forward on 7th March and developed on 31st March for the stabilization of the European situation under the new conditions. The essential elements of those proposals were really three-fold: a non-aggression and mutual security arrangement in Western Europe between the five Powers who were parties to the Treaty of Locarno; non-aggression pacts between Germany and her neighbours on her north-eastern and south-eastern frontiers; and the return of Germany to the League of Nations.

So far as we are concerned, I must once again emphasize, we are ready to negotiate a non-aggression and mutual-assistance arrangement in Western Europe. Such an arrangement would be all the more cordially welcomed in this country if it embodied the idea of an air pact as proposed last year and were accompanied by arrangements for

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the limitation of air forces. But there are points which are not clear about the non-aggression pacts proposed by Germany in Central and Eastern Europe, and, though the point perhaps is less immediate, about the circumstances of Germany's return to the League of Nations.

In a Note of 6th May which has been published we have invited the German Government to give us certain further explanations on these points; and in view of certain recent observations of the German Government we have also thought it essential to ascertain whether from now on the German Government regard Germany as being in a position in which she can conclude binding treaties, and in which she can signify that she recognizes and intends to respect the existing political and territorial status of Europe except in so far as this might subsequently be modified by free negotiation and agreement.

We are confident that at a very early date we shall receive the German Government's views on these matters. We earnestly trust that they will be of such a nature that no obstacle will remain to the opening of negotiations which we so greatly desire and the success of which we consider to be so essential to the peace of Europe.

THE FAILURE OF SANCTIONS

The flight of the Emperor and the absence of any effective Abyssinian Government in the country, in addition to Italian military occupation of Addis Ababa, showed clearly that economic sanctions against Italy had failed to prevent that country from bringing the campaign to a successful conclusion. In these circumstances His Majesty's Government took the view that no useful purpose would be served by maintaining the sanctions which had been imposed against Italy. Mr. Eden described the situation to the House of Commons on 18th June 1936.

I MUST make it clear at the outset that the Government welcome this debate. They welcome it as affording us an opportunity to make plain the attitude of His Majesty's Government to a number of problems which at present confront the League of Nations, and upon some of which the League will have to take decisions towards the close of this month. In a later part of my speech I wish to deal with other international problems which confront us—problems of no less importance than those which will be discussed at Geneva at the end of the month. But I would like to begin by attempting to put the statement of the Government's policy in respect to the future of sanctions in its true perspective.

Ever since the Italo-Abyssinian dispute began, until now, the Government have taken their full part in collective action. About that there can be no dispute. Certainly it may be argued that collective action should have been more thorough or more complete, but nobody can deny

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that in the action which has been taken His Majesty's Government have played their full part. We have no intention of departing from that principle now. On the contrary, we shall continue that practice, and collective action remains our aim. In consequence we shall continue to take our full share in any decision which the League of Nations in its Assembly at the end of this month may decide to take. We are not the League; we are a member of the League. We shall act fully and loyally in line with any action which the Assembly of fifty nations may decide upon. It would be, I suggest to the Committee, open to the Government to say that, and to say no more until we get to Geneva. [*Interruption.*] It would be open. It would be the very collective action, in one aspect, of which honourable Members speak. It is impossible to have it both ways. You cannot both complain that we must take our full part in collective action and also complain that we do not state our views in advance. [HON. MEMBERS: "The Chancellor of the Exchequer."] I say that it would be possible for His Majesty's Government to pursue that course, but in our view, at what is clearly a period of difficulty in the League's history, that would not be a very heroic course, nor one, I believe, which either this House or the country would wish us to take. There is a responsibility.

MR. GALLACHER: A responsibility in running away.

MR. EDEN: Perhaps the honourable Gentleman will let me make my observations. The Government have a responsibility to the League—a responsibility not only for compliance, but also for guidance. Many times in this dispute the Government have given the lead, many times, and honourable Gentlemen opposite will find not one time when anybody else has given it; many times we have given

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the lead. We gave it in January of last year, when it was our insistence which brought this dispute within the jurisdiction and the action of the Council itself. It was our action and our efforts in the intervening months that resulted in the Council in May handling this dispute which resulted in the passage of a resolution which maintained the right of the Council, hitherto challenged by Italy, to follow the course of the dispute, and which secured the acceptance then, in May, of the principle and of the machinery of conciliation. Again, it was on the initiative of the British Government that the Council met in July when it otherwise would not have met till September. It was at our instance, jointly with the French Government, that a three-Power conference was called in Paris in August last year. It is quite true that the Paris Conference was abortive, but no one who at that time or now looked at its proceedings would maintain that our own Government did not do the utmost they could to bring about its success. Again, in September my Right Honourable Friend the First Lord of the Admiralty took the lead at Geneva in a speech which met with approval from all sections of opinion in this country; and in October, when it came to . . . the organization and application of the collective action which fifty nations of the League had decided for the first time in history that they would take, again it was this Government which took the lead, both in proposing and in organizing the work of those Committees.

Those are facts which cannot be challenged, which must be admitted by anyone who chooses with any attempt at impartiality to review the events of the past few months. Now that the League is perplexed it is the view of the Government that it is its duty to take the lead again. No

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doubt it would be easy, quite easy for us not to do so, and to leave it to someone else and to follow after someone else's lead, but I do not believe that that is the right attitude for this country to take. I am quite convinced that so far from this lead, which we are going to take, embarrassing others, it will be welcomed in many quarters. [HON. MEMBERS: "In Rome."] What, in the view of the Government, should the League do? Whatever view we take of the course of action which the League should follow, there is one fact upon which we must all be agreed. We have to admit that the purpose for which sanctions were imposed has not been realized. It is not necessary to give a detailed account of the reasons for that fact; they are many. No doubt there were serious miscalculations. One of them was a miscalculation by military opinion in most countries that the conflict would last very much longer than it has in fact done, and that in consequence the sanctions which everyone knew could not operate at once would produce their effect and assist thereby to obtain a settlement. In any event, I ask the Committee to remember that there was a very good reason for the League to enforce the sanctions, the particular ones they chose, because with an incomplete membership they were the only ones they could impose and which by their own action alone they could hope to see effective. [HON. MEMBERS: "Oil."] Oil could not be made effective by League action alone. . . .

The fact has to be faced that sanctions did not realize the purpose for which they were imposed. The Italian military campaign succeeded. The capital and the most important part of Abyssinia are in Italian military occupation, and so far as I am aware no Abyssinian Government survives in

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any part of the Emperor's territory. That is a situation which has got to be faced. It is a situation which nothing but military action from without, from outside the country, can possibly reverse. Is there any country prepared to take such military action? Or is there any section of opinion in this country prepared to take such military action?

MR. McGOVERN: The Labour Party.

MR. EDEN: Those are the hard facts of the situation, and I submit that no Member of this Committee can escape from facing them if he is willing to appreciate the full problem with which the Government are today confronted. I suggest that those facts, unwelcome though they are, do bring us to one definite conclusion—that if the League is to attain the objective for which it originally set out, then it has to be ready to take measures of an altogether different character from those applied hitherto. To use plain language, it is plain that if the League means to enforce in Abyssinia a peace which the League can rightly approve, then the League must take action of a kind which must inevitably lead to war in the Mediterranean. No man can say that such a war would be confined to the Mediterranean. I have no reason to think that the League favours such departure or such action. I have no reason to believe that this country, upon whom the greatest burden of such a war must fall, desires it either.

Though the League has not availed to prevent the successful accomplishment of a violation of the Covenant, the Government do not regret, and I do not believe our fellow members of the League regret, having made the attempt. We have in common applied all those economic and financial measures upon which general agreement could be obtained, in the hope that action would be effective. We

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ourselves proposed virtually all the most important. These are the motives with which we did so, and in that respect we have nothing to apologize for and nothing to retract. There is no question—I must emphasize it—in our view, of the judgement passed by the League last autumn on the act of aggression being either modified or reversed.

Now I come to the steps to be taken at the next meeting of the League. The League, the Assembly of fifty nations there, will then have to review the whole situation of which this question of sanctions forms only a part. We cannot tell what will be the views of the various Governments represented there, but His Majesty's Government, after mature consideration, on advice which I as Foreign Secretary thought it my duty to give them, have come to the conclusion that there is no longer any utility in continuing these measures as a means of pressure upon Italy—[HON. MEMBERS: "Shame!" "Resign!" "Sabotage!"]—If the Committee will bear with me I will give them the reasons which have brought us to take this decision. It cannot be expected by anyone that the continuance of existing sanctions will restore in Abyssinia the position which has been destroyed; nobody expects that. That position can be restored only by military action. So far as I am aware no other Government, certainly not this Government, is prepared to take such military action.

In my view sanctions can be maintained only for some clearly defined and specific purpose. The only such purpose conceivable is the restoration in Abyssinia of the position which has been destroyed. Since that restoration cannot be effected except by military action, I suggest that that purpose does not in fact exist, and to maintain sanctions without any clearly defined purpose—which many people, I

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know, would wish to do—would have only this result: It would result in the crumbling of the sanctions front, so that in a few weeks' time the League would be confronted with a state of affairs still more derogatory than that which we have to face today. If further maintenance of sanctions would serve no useful purpose there is a danger that to attempt them would only bring disorder into what are at present the well-ordered ranks of the League countries imposing sanctions—[*Laughter*]. Honourable Members may find that amusing, but I do not believe it is in the interest of the League itself that the sanctions front should crumble into confusion. I think it is right that the League should admit that sanctions have not realized their purpose and should face that fact.

Those are the considerations which the Government have had in mind in coming to their decision. But I must repeat that the decision which is to be taken is a League decision, and the Government will, of course, concur in whatever is the view of the Assembly as a whole. None the less we have thought it our duty in advance to state our position before we go there. . . .

There is another aspect of the events of the last few months to which I wish at this stage to draw the attention of the Members of the Committee, and in respect of which I wish to make a declaration on behalf of the Government. The Members of the Committee will perhaps recall the fact that last December exchanges of view took place between His Majesty's Government and the governments of certain Mediterranean Powers, as a result of which certain reciprocal assurances were exchanged under Paragraph 3 of Article 16 of the Covenant. Papers were laid at the time. In brief, the effect of the assurances we gave was that we

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assured certain Mediterranean countries that we would come to their aid in the event of their being attacked for action which they were taking under Article 16. It is the view of the Government that this assurance given by this country should not end with the raising of sanctions but should continue to cover the period of uncertainty which must necessarily follow any termination of action under Article 16. Therefore, should the Assembly at the end of the month decide to raise sanctions, His Majesty's Government intend, with a view to making their contribution to establishing confidence in the regions concerned, to state at Geneva that such are our views.

I need hardly add that the Government regard any such eventuality as those assurances covered not only as hypothetical but as improbable. Moreover, obviously—[*Interruption*]. If honourable Members opposite would put themselves in the position of the countries concerned they would not interrupt me. Moreover, obviously, these assurances would be intended to operate only so long as in the opinion of the Government they remain appropriate to the circumstances. Within these limits we think it right that these assurances should continue, and we are prepared to state that fact at Geneva. Moreover, in the light of the experience of recent months the Government have determined that it is necessary that we should maintain permanently in the Mediterranean a defensive position stronger than that which existed before this dispute began. Arrangements will be made to carry out that declaration.

Important as these matters are, there is another problem the significance of which in my view dominates everything else at this time—the future of the League itself. A further reason which actuated me and actuated the Government

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in the decision that I have just announced was the conviction that the future of the League needs to be earnestly and urgently considered by all its members. We believe that such consideration can only be given when the pre-occupations and problems in connection with the imposition of sanctions have been liquidated. I must make it plain that the Government are determined that the League should go on. [HON. MEMBERS: "Where? Which way?"] In our view, the course which we are pursuing is much more calculated to secure that result than the jibes of honourable Members opposite. I was going to say "the course of honourable Members opposite," but they never tell us what it is. In our view, the fact that the League has tried and failed in this instance is not a reason for making us wish that the attempt had not been made, but it is a reason for making us determine to seek so to organize the League that it may achieve the best chance of success hereafter. . . . If the League is to have its best chance of success then it must be organized on a basis which takes account of the lessons of the last few months. Those lessons have to be analysed, and the instruction which they give has to be embodied in the future practice of the League.

The Government do not anticipate that at the Session of the Assembly at the end of this month the other nations will be willing or ready to deal with that vast problem of the future of the League. We think probably it would be wiser to leave the dealing with that problem until the normal Assembly in September. But in the meanwhile each Government should be engaged, must be engaged, on considering the shortcomings, the weaknesses and even the dangers which have been revealed by the experience of the last few months. All minds must be turned actively to

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that task. His Majesty's Government have already begun upon it. We are already actively engaged upon it, and we shall keep in close touch with the Dominions in respect of this question. Our intention is to make the most constructive and effective contribution in our power at the Assembly which takes place in September.

The question is, can the world succeed in reorganizing itself on a peace basis? I am convinced, despite the events of the last few months, that it can, if it will. I am convinced that it remains true that a universal League of Nations of substantially disarmed States, in a world made safe for democracy—that is what the Covenant contemplated—can effectively and without doubt maintain peace, but, unhappily as I believe for mankind, such a League has never in fact existed, nor in present conditions can it readily be seen how such a League can be made. I say that to the Committee in order that they may appreciate that we are today confronted with problems totally different in character, unwelcome though those differences may be, from the problems which confronted the original authors of the Covenant. We have to comprise within one organization the willing collaboration of governments of totally divergent character. That gives some indication of the nature of the problem, but unless we do face it we cannot expect the League in the future effectively to meet these problems. At least I will give the Committee this definite assurance, that the Government will strive to restore to the League its full authority, after this set-back which we admit, and to that end we propose to devote ourselves.

I should like to turn to another and no less important aspect of the international situation which now confronts us, and I want to deal, if the Committee will allow me,

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with the negotiations which the Government have sought to set on foot ever since the German re-occupation of the Rhineland in March. Successive Governments in this country have long stood for a policy based on a desire to establish good relations between Germany and the countries which were her enemies in the War. We have sought to do that on a basis of German equality and independence and the equality and independence of others, and on a basis of respect for engagements undertaken. The collaboration of Germany is indispensable to the peace of Europe, and we have asked, as successive British Governments have asked, nothing better than to work with Germany to that end. That is the purpose that underlay the Treaty of Locarno negotiated by my Right Honourable Friend the Member for West Birmingham [Sir A. Chamberlain]. It was the purpose in the mind of successive British Governments when they negotiated the reparation arrangements, culminating in their disappearance at Lausanne altogether. It formed part of the negotiations of the Disarmament Conference, and after the breakdown of that conference in the spring of 1934 the Government of this country did not relax their efforts. The Committee has only to read the Blue Book which we published last April—I think it is of interest to read that Blue Book—to appreciate the whole course which these negotiations have followed.

There are only one or two of these most important matters to which I desire to refer. In February of last year the joint Anglo-French Declaration was agreed upon in London to try to secure a general settlement for the pacification of Europe. That was a comprehensive settlement, comprising proposed agreements between Germany and a num-

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ber of European States, mutual air pact agreements, and armaments which should replace the armament clauses of the Treaty of Versailles. Soon after that meeting in March Germany enacted conscription by declaration, and the task of His Majesty's Government was thereby complicated, but we persevered throughout last year in efforts, constantly renewed, to secure air pact arrangements in Eastern Europe and an agreed limitation of certain forms of armaments. For various reasons the German Government felt obliged to postpone their response to our efforts.

That was the situation which I found at the end of the year when I came to the Foreign Office. I felt that I must make plain at once how earnest was my desire to enter into friendly discussions with the German Government in order to secure working arrangements in which that country could participate. Accordingly I instructed our Ambassador in Berlin to tell Herr Hitler that I shared the view he had expressed as to the importance of close collaboration and understanding between Great Britain, France, and Germany, and I expressed the hope that the two Governments would keep that object in view despite the fact that Germany was unwilling at that moment to open discussions.

At intervals in January and February we sought to make progress with these negotiations and also with an air pact, but the next development was on 7th March, when the German Ambassador came to the Foreign Office and informed me that German troops had entered the demilitarized zone that morning. I do not want this afternoon to repeat the earlier observations I had to make on that matter. Suffice it to say, and the whole Committee knows it, that the suddenness of that action on the part of the

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German Government aroused the utmost anxiety and disquiet in Belgium and in France, and for other reasons among countries in a great part of Europe. In those circumstances the policy of the Government was to seek to calm anxieties and thus promote a situation in which considered reflection and careful negotiations might be possible.

Ever since the events of 7th March we have sought to rebuild. We did not suppose, of course, that the action of the German Government could be revoked, and we did not ask for it, but we did hope from the German Government some contribution which would show, as they affirmed themselves, that their action was only of symbolic significance. We asked the German Government to make spontaneously a contribution towards the restoration of confidence. The German Government unhappily felt unable to do so. So far as we are concerned we have done everything we could to restore confidence and allay apprehensions. That is why we reaffirmed on the 19th March our obligations and our guarantees under the Locarno Treaty. That is why, as tangible evidence, we agreed to Staff conversations to arrange the technical conditions in which our obligations could be carried out in case of unprovoked aggression. Moreover, we made it plain at once that we were ready to negotiate with Germany, France, and Belgium, new non-aggression and security arrangements for Western Europe.

But it was also clear, in view of the German occupation of the zone, that Europe at large would wish to know what Germany's intentions were towards the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, and all the more naturally in the light of the proposals which the German Chancellor had himself announced. Moreover, it was important for us and

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for Europe to be assured that Germany now felt that a point had been reached at which she could signify that she recognized and intended to respect the existing territorial and political status of Europe except of course as it might subsequently be modified by free negotiations and agreements. A frank and a reassuring response to that question I am sure would be the signal for a return of confidence to Europe. I believe that nothing less, if I may say so, than a European settlement and appeasement should be our aim. If a reassurance can be given on this point then there are elements in the present situation which would enable us to attempt to conclude a permanent settlement in Europe based on the disappearance of the demilitarized zone. That was the primary purpose of the communication which the British Ambassador made to the German Government on the 6th May last. The inquiries thus put to the German Government were in our view very necessary and legitimate on our part. They were made as soon as possible after we had elucidated the position at Geneva in a meeting with the other Powers signatory to the Locarno Treaty. For that reason the Government felt justified in looking for an early reply from the German Government, a reply which we trust will enable progress to be made with the negotiations which it is our first object to see successfully realized.

In the remarks which I have addressed to the Committee this afternoon I have confined myself to two subjects, but there are many other problems. Although there are many other problems no one in the Committee will deny that it is these two problems, the Italo-Abyssinian dispute and the negotiations with Germany, which dominate the present situation. Neither of them is of our own making, but

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we cannot ignore either. There seems to me to be a tendency in some quarters to close the eye to one and let the other occupy the whole field. The Government with their responsibilities cannot afford to do that. I recognize, no one better, that there are many people in this country who have given the Government strong support in the Italo-Abyssinian dispute, and, if I may say so, who have given me personally strong support. I can understand only too well their keen disappointment at present events. As a convinced believer in the League, I share that disappointment, but I feel I am entitled to ask honourable Members in all parts of the Committee to look at this problem as a whole.

It is in that perspective that the practical question of what to do about sanctions has to be decided. If we cling to a course after the objective has become unattainable, we may lose a greater end for which we are working, the greater end being in anxious days to keep peace. To that end we have to bend all our energies. If it means admitting failure in one instance, that has got to be faced. This is a situation in which there is no ideal way out. If there were, there would be no difference between us in any part of the Committee or in the country. The aim upon which we are all united is that peace, not chaos and catastrophe, shall rule. Peace is the one essential need of the world. It is because I believe profoundly that the policy I have outlined to this Committee this afternoon is the one which, in the present anxious, difficult, and critical situation, is most likely to preserve peace that I submit it with a deep conviction and with a full sense of responsibility to this Committee.

THE ANGLO-EGYPTIAN TREATY

After many years of negotiation a Treaty of Alliance with Egypt was signed on 26th August 1936 at the Foreign Office by Mr. Eden on behalf of His Majesty's Government, and by Nahas Pasha, on behalf of the Egyptian Government. Mr. Eden addressed the delegates.

YOUR EXCELLENCIES,

It has afforded me the keenest pleasure to be able, on behalf of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, to welcome this Egyptian Delegation to London and, by the signature of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of Alliance, to participate in the successful conclusion of the efforts of the last sixteen years to reach a satisfactory solution of the problems inherent in Anglo-Egyptian relations. If we have been able to reach this happy conclusion, it has been due to the growing conviction in both countries that their interests are inseparably linked. This conviction has been strengthened by recent events and by the realization that in a singularly troubled world it would be of great and general advantage that we should find means of collaborating more closely for the maintenance of good relations and for the protection of our common interests. Although this conviction of our community of interests has been an essential factor in the success of our negotiations, the spirit of understanding and goodwill displayed by the Egyptian Delegation under the able leadership of the Prime Minister, Nahas Pasha, in the course of these pro-

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tracted discussions has greatly contributed to the result which we are recording today. I feel sure that the Egyptian Delegation will agree that this spirit has been equally evident on our side.

The composition of the Egyptian Delegation has also helped appreciably in the conduct of the negotiations. Including, as it does, eminent representatives of nearly all parties in Egypt, the Egyptian Delegation has been able to speak with authority and to inspire complete confidence that its opinion was truly representative. I hope that this factor will not be without importance for the future.

I have seen it said that the Treaty marks the end of an epoch in Anglo-Egyptian relations; I would prefer to regard it as the beginning of a new stage. During this stage the relations between our two countries will be largely governed by the provisions of this Treaty and by the articles to which we are today setting our signatures. But however carefully a treaty may be drafted, much will inevitably depend upon the manner in which it is fulfilled. I can assure you that in putting the Treaty into effect His Majesty's Government will be guided by the same spirit of co-operation as that by which they have been actuated during the recent negotiations. I am confident that the Egyptian Government will fulfil the Treaty with an equal loyalty.

I think we should not pass the mention of the long connection between our peoples without a reference to the great services that it has fallen to men of British race to be able to give during the last half-century to Egypt, among whom Lord Cromer was surely pre-eminent, working, as they were proud to do, in close collaboration with outstanding representatives of the Egyptian people. This long

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connection has endured through decades which have seen fundamental changes in so many parts of the world, and has been a source of pride to all our countrymen. In their tireless efforts to secure agreement in these negotiations Sir Miles Lampson and his collaborators have worthily upheld these traditions.

The Treaty which we are about to sign is the pledge and instrument of our future collaboration. We earnestly hope that the alliance which we thereby inaugurate today may be at once the means of enabling the Governments of our two countries to work together in close amity for the furtherance of their common interests, and the symbol of a freely agreed and enduring partnership between the British and Egyptian peoples.

WAR IN SPAIN

On 18th July 1936 civil war in Spain broke out, and on the initiative of the French Government a Non-Intervention Committee was set up in London with the object of localizing the war and preventing a purely Spanish conflict from becoming the cause of a major conflagration in Europe. Mr. Eden reviewed the situation in a speech at the Cutlers' Feast at Sheffield on 14th October.

PREOCCUPATION with the international situation is wide and deep. I am glad, therefore, to have an opportunity to put before an audience at home a few reflections on the significance to us here of events in Europe.

I do not believe that my own personal reflections will differ in character from those of you who are listening to me tonight, because so far as I can observe there exists a very general and widespread feeling in this country of distaste for those extreme political doctrines which are being preached and fostered in different forms in different countries. Accompanying this distaste for extremes there has been borne in on us an increased appreciation of and an increased attachment to those free institutions which we have inherited from our fathers and which are the expression of British life and of British character. We have no wish to quarrel with others who have parted from our methods and have preferred to adopt different systems of government. That is their own affair. But it is our affair, and very much our affair, that we should not part with our own methods or weaken in loyalty to our own institutions.

In the midst of all the turmoil of present-day Europe we

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can be excused for observing with some pride that our own machinery of constitutional government continues to work smoothly and that freedom of person and of thought is respected and preserved. In a world in which national prestige is worshipped as a golden calf I trust that we shall take as the standard of our own prestige as a nation our ability to combine tolerance and personal freedom with strong and effective government. Democracy comes near to dictatorship when the will of the majority is imposed in a spirit of intolerance on the minority. British democracy should see to it that the majority secures for the minority proper scope and conditions of life. So long as such a spirit prevails at home our national prestige abroad will remain high. So long as such a spirit prevails we shall secure the widest possible unity of purpose at home and that in itself is the surest basis of strong government.

In saying this I have in mind the need for strengthening the national will so that the pulse of our national life may beat more strongly. We have to prove that not only is life under a free constitution more pleasant than under any other system, but that it can retain its freshness and vigour. We have to show as great a readiness to serve the State when the State exists for the people as when the people exist for the State. We have to show this, not by words but by action; by the action of each individual as well as by the action of the Government. If there is one lesson we should learn from the tumultuous course of events in Europe, it is surely this, that the people of this country, this favoured and fortunate country, must exert every effort of mind and body to preserve the legacy of tradition and opportunity which has come down to them and strive with persistence and imagination for its wider and fuller development.

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In urging a closer attachment to our own institutions and our own standards of life, I do not imply any attitude of detachment from the affairs of Europe. Even if that were desirable it is not possible. We have always played a part in Europe and we shall continue to do so. We have indeed had to do so recently and somewhat suddenly in connection with the tragic series of events which have taken place in Spain and their reaction upon the rest of Europe. I need not describe in detail the course of this conflict, but there is an aspect of it to which I must refer. Events in Spain have not only brought suffering to that distressed country, but, owing to the exceptional circumstances of the conflict, they might have had consequences scarcely less serious over a much wider area of Europe. The fighting that broke out in this comparatively isolated corner of Western Europe threatened at a moment's notice to scatter strife far beyond the borders of Spain.

Faced with this situation His Majesty's Government welcomed and supported with all their influence the initiative of the French Government. That initiative was taken in a sincere attempt to circumscribe, by international agreement, the dangerous situation which had arisen in Spain. The French Prime Minister's action was a courageous one, and that of a good European. . . .

I am well aware of the criticisms which are being directed against the agreement. It is even being suggested that the time has now come to give up this effort. His Majesty's Government do not share that view. . . . They support non-intervention. That view is strongly held and has never wavered. We are for our part determined to carry out loyally our own undertaking and to promote in every way possible

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the execution of the terms of the agreement. We consider this is the best, if not the only, way, to avert the dangerous developments which are inherent in the Spanish situation. However tragic the civil strife in Spain may be, it in no way absolves us from our duty to make every effort to confine that tragedy within the boundaries of the country wherein it is being enacted. . . .

I must now say a word on the subject of armaments. We are engaged upon fulfilling a very considerable programme for the re-equipment of our three Services, Navy, Army, and Air. We should have preferred an arms agreement; but in a world as it is today the strengthening of our own defences becomes not only a desirable objective, but an imperative national duty. This strengthening of our forces will not be used to accompany our diplomatic proposals with threats. Such are not our methods. Its usefulness will lie in this: that Europe may be convinced that we are strong enough to play our part to keep the peace, and that violent courses can be met with firm resistance. . . .

I cannot but conclude on a note of hope and thankfulness—hope that a European conflict which has preyed on many people as a nightmare may be averted, and thankfulness that our people should remain calm and united in a world which has need of unity and calm judgement. This factor may be an immense asset not only to ourselves, but to all Europe. Leaders have appeared in many nations, men of remarkable and unusual gifts, who have infused into their people a spirit of almost fanatical obedience. Yet there is room for a different kind of leadership, leadership based on the unity of a whole nation with long-established traditions of freedom which are the very essence of its national life.

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Let us not only preach peace, but by the practice of unity at home, equip ourselves all the more surely for its maintenance abroad. I believe that the time will come—and it may not be far distant—when this nation, strong of arm and strong of purpose, will be able to turn the scales on the side of peace and freedom.

A CALL FOR STRENGTH AND UNITY

On 5th November 1936, the third day of the Debate on the Address, Mr. Eden gave the House of Commons a broad outline of the international situation. He referred in particular to the importance of strengthening the authority of the League, gave an account of the progress of negotiations for a European settlement, and emphasized the need for British rearmament.

MY first sentence would be to express thanks, both to the House and to the honourable Gentleman who is spokesman for the Opposition on this occasion, for the arrangement which had been come to and which permits of the Government's spokesman opening this discussion. I believe that, in the ordinary exchanges of parliamentary debate, it is held to be to the advantage of the Government to hear first the questions and, maybe, the criticism, which is directed against them, in order that they might prepare a reply. In the circumstances of the present international situation, it seemed to the Government that the stage should be somewhat differently set, and that the issues were in themselves so serious that it would be to the general advantage of the House if the representative of the Government were to open the discussion this afternoon with a general statement of the international situation and of the Government's policy.

I think we must all of us be acutely conscious of the anxieties of the present international situation; indeed, it

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is difficult for anyone to escape their constant summons. Not only are international events freely commented upon, which could be all to the good, but it has now become almost a habit for statements of international policy to be made, not through diplomatic channels or even by personal contact at Geneva, but from the public rostrum, in tones which are certainly not subdued, and to audiences which resemble, as nearly as it can be arranged, world proportions. It is no part of my intention to imitate that practice; nevertheless I think it is desirable that the view of this Government and this country should be stated, and stated plainly, and there is no more fitting place for such a statement than this House of Commons, which is at once the authority for our actions and the embodiment of the methods we prefer. Now may I state in frank terms the outlines of our policy, our view of the international situation, and the policy which we accordingly intend to pursue? In doing that, I shall not retrace the ground of past controversies; that has been done a great many times. I think that all sections of the House today will agree that, with the manifold and urgent anxieties that confront us in the international situation, it is to the present and the future that we must direct our attention.

Will the House allow me one other introductory observation? All must have noticed in the last year the factor in international events that speed has become. That is a phenomenon of our modern life that is going to be always with us. The lightning of events is accompanied almost simultaneously by the thunder of their repercussion. It is not always easy for us, in this peaceful island, to keep pace with the restless movement and the dynamic of events elsewhere. For that reason we must always be prepared to take stock

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of our ideas and of our policy, if we are to keep pace with events and to make our best contribution.

Despite those factors, it is true to say that there are certain guiding principles which must determine British foreign policy. The first and most important of these is in relation to the League of Nations. It is fashionable at this time in some quarters to sneer at the League. We do not join in that practice. On the contrary, it is our hope and our intention to prove that those sneers are unjustified. At the same time, we must not make the mistake of believing that what we want to exist in the world does exist simply because we want it. The League is not today the instrument which all of us would like to see it. To pretend that it is, or even, if I may say so, to pretend that the fact that it is not is due only to the lukewarmness of His Majesty's Government, is to live in a fool's paradise; or to believe that the only use for a stick is to beat the Government of this country. That may be a good use, but I suggest that it should not be an exclusive one, and that there may be others who deserve it more. Equally it is our duty in the present conditions to rid our thoughts of the unreal and of what is no longer in accord with the international situation, however unpalatable the consequent facts we have to face may be.

In the first instance I would like to put to the House certain fundamental realities in the present international situation. It is real to believe that the principles for which the League stands are the best yet devised for the regulation of international affairs. It is real to recognize that some nations do not at present share that view. It is real to recognize that until they do the authority of the League cannot be complete, though it can yet be important—and it is our duty to make it as important as is possible. It is real, I sug-

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gest to the House, and not inconsistent with what I have just said, to make it plain that this country will be second to none in the defence of its legitimate interests as a nation. It is also real to say that the defence of those interests is in no way directed against the legitimate interests of any other nations. Having said that, we have only dealt with one side of our task. The honourable Member for Bishop Auckland [Mr. Dalton] said some time ago that it is one thing to state one's faith and intention and that it is another to act so as to turn that faith and intention into practice. Let me turn to the action side of our belief.

I will not recapitulate to the House this afternoon the detailed proposals which I, on the authority of His Majesty's Government, put before the League Assembly last year. Those proposals did not affect the fundamental structure of the League but they did aim at two main purposes and two important main purposes, about which I would like to say a word. The first objective we had in mind was to enable the League to take action at the earliest possible moment in any given dispute. For that reason we favoured the modification of the present unanimity rule because that rule may prevent the Council taking action under Article 11 previous to the actual outbreak of hostilities. Any one nation before then can stop the action being taken. We had, during the Italo-Abyssinian dispute, plenty of evidence that the existence of the unanimity rule had its effect upon the course of nations' conduct. There is another reason why we wish to see that rule amended. If it were carried out, it would be possible for all nations to state clearly their views in any given dispute at an early date. That in its turn has two advantages. The first is that if a would-be aggressor sees the extent and the reality of the efforts that the nations are pre-

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pared to make, then the most important part of the League's action, the preventive part—can be effective. If, on the other hand, the League is not prepared to take action, then it is much better that everybody concerned should know it. Therefore, we favour that rule because we think it approaches the structure of the League to the realities of the situation.

The second of our main proposed changes was to deal with the other side of the League's activities, which has been the cause—we have got to face it—of the defection of one or two members in the past. The charge against the League is that it is devoted solely to the maintenance of the *status quo*. The Covenant itself realizes, by Article XIX, the impracticability of the rigid maintenance for all time of the *status quo*, and it is for the committee which the League has now set up, which meets next month, and on which we shall be represented, to consider this aspect of the League's future also. We believe that those suggestions which we have put forward have met with a considerable measure of approval, and will be of service to the reconstruction of the League's authority.

But parallel with that work there is another aspect of the endeavours of His Majesty's Government about which I wish to say something—the efforts which have been made towards and the present prospects of a meeting of the Five Power Conference. The House will perhaps recollect that, when we last discussed this matter in July, we had just concluded a meeting of three Powers here in London—Belgium, France, and ourselves—as the outcome of which an invitation had been addressed both to Germany and to Italy, the other two Powers, to attend a meeting. Shortly after the House rose, that invitation was accepted by Germany and

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Italy. Our first duty in consequence of that was to prepare the ground for the task of the Conference, which has been set out in the communiqué that we agreed upon in London. It consists, in the first place, of the negotiation of a new agreement to take the place of Locarno, and it will be followed by other matters affecting European peace which, in the words of the Communiqué, necessarily come under discussion.

As soon as that acceptance was received, it fell to us to act as something of a means of exchange between the nations in relation to the Conference. It fell to us to make an examination of the prospects of the Conference, and, more particularly, of certain questions in respect of which preparation was essential before the Conference met if it is to have any chance of success. As the result of that work, in the middle of September we addressed Notes to the four other Powers setting out what we considered were the main points, and also stating our own views upon each of them. The views of all five of the Powers are now known. In the last week or two we have been studying and collating these replies, and only yesterday we communicated afresh with the other four governments on the subject.

I know that the House will not expect me to give a detailed account of the negotiations, but I would like to be allowed to give a general appreciation of the prospects as I see them. The exchanges up to date have revealed certain important divergences. None of these divergences, as a matter of fact, was in the nature of a surprise to us, and, though they are very formidable, they are not necessarily insuperable. Within a very short time now we should be in a position to appreciate accurately what are the chances of success for the Conference. So far as we are concerned, I can give

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the House this assurance, that we shall continue to do what lies in our power to bring about the success of this meeting, but I add this rider, that we consider this meeting to be quite as much in the interests of the other Powers concerned as it is in our own.

Having spoken of those two subjects, I want to turn to our relations with certain foreign Powers, and to say something about each of them. I am going to do that, not with a view to swelling the torrent of international polemics, much as I may be tempted to do so, and I think we could do so. I can imagine no two better dialecticians, if we came to the point, than my Right Honourable Friend the Member for Epping [Mr. Churchill] and the Right Honourable Gentleman the Member for Carnarvon Boroughs [Mr. Lloyd George]. However, that is not my purpose this afternoon, but to seek to contribute something to the appeasement of international relations. I will begin with our near neighbours across the Channel. Our relations with the French Government at this time are, I am happy to say, both close and cordial. Indeed, I think it would be difficult to recall a time when they were better. Perhaps it is natural that, in the disturbed world of today, the two great democracies of Western Europe should be drawn together; it is certainly natural that in such conditions they should find many points of policy in common. But there is nothing exclusive in that friendship on the part of either of us. We have both of us made it clear that we are not only willing but desirous to secure the co-operation of others.

It is sometimes forgotten how considerable a step forward was taken by the communiqué issued at the end of the Three Power Conference in London; no document could have more clearly indicated a readiness to open a new chapter.

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We can, happily for the present disturbed state of the world, look forward, I am sure, with confidence to continued close co-operation between the French Government and ourselves. What I have said of France applies equally in the case of Belgium, and in connection with that country I would like also to add, in relation to the recent statement of Belgian policy, that we have received assurances that Belgium stands by her existing obligations.

I come now to Germany. There have been repeated declarations in Germany of a desire for closer Anglo-German friendship. That desire is generally reciprocated in this country. There are, however, two conditions which are inevitably attached to any friendship which this country can proffer to any other country, whether France, Germany, or any other. Those are that such friendship cannot be exclusive, and that such friendship cannot be directed against anyone else. In speaking of Germany, I must comment on a tendency which has been noticeable there lately to put the blame on this country for Germany's economic difficulties. That is a doctrine which we cannot for a moment accept, nor is it in accordance with the facts. It would be possible for me this afternoon to detail to the House at some length the degree to which this country has tried to co-operate with Germany since the War in the economic and financial spheres. It is a fact, for example, that we alone, without mentioning the United States of America, have lent to Germany in one way and another since the War an almost equivalent figure to the amount we have received from her by way of reparations. So far as our own trade relations with Germany are concerned, the House will recall the very important Anglo-German Payments Agreement of 1934, which still operates, and which preserves a normal ratio between this country

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and Germany at the figure of 55 to 100; that is to say, we buy £100 worth of goods from Germany for every £55 worth of our goods that she buys, and we thus leave £45 at the disposal of Germany for the purpose of buying raw materials and foodstuffs and for meeting her financial obligations. I make bold to say that there is no other country with whom Germany has so favourable an agreement.

Much more important than this aspect of the question, or than any arguments of this character, is the central problem which we have to face, namely, the possibility of securing an increase in the volume of world trade, which will involve an increase in Germany's exports as in those of everyone else. In that connection I want to say something about the hopeful line of approach which was contained in the recent Three Power Currency Declaration, and notably the reference in that declaration to the possibility of action being taken without delay to relax, and as soon as possible to abolish, the present system of quota and exchange control. This is the point to which I wish to draw the attention of the House. The co-operation of other nations, including Germany, was specifically invited in this programme, and we should be only too glad if Germany saw fit to take her part in this programme. In so far as her economic difficulties arise out of international restrictions of an economic and financial character, and not out of decisions taken by her to deal with her own internal difficulties, we should always be glad to consider with sympathy any methods which appeared likely to contribute towards their easement. We desire Germany's co-operation in the economic as well as in the political sphere, and there can be no question on our part of the encirclement of Germany in either.

I turn now to Italy. It is necessary to recall that the de-

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terioration in our relations with Italy was due to our endeavour to fulfil our obligations under the Covenant to which we had set our name. There never has been, so far as concerns this country, an Anglo-Italian quarrel. That has been said by many people on many occasions before; I repeat it and emphasize it further, because, until it is recognized in Italy as being the truth, our relations will suffer from misunderstanding. The differences that have existed between us and Italy have been due to our differing—I regret to note, still differing—conceptions of the methods by which the world should order its international affairs. In his speech at Milan on 1st November Signor Mussolini included a general review of Italy's relations with foreign countries and the League of Nations, and he made some important observations about relations with this country on which the House may expect me to dwell. These observations related mainly to the future relations of the two countries in the Mediterranean. Describing our own interests in that sea, Signor Mussolini is reported to have said:

“This sea is for Great Britain only a route, one of the many routes, I should say a short cut, by which she reaches more quickly her outlying territories.”

It will be as well that I should say at once that the implication that that freedom to come and go in the Mediterranean is for this country a convenience rather than a vital interest is one which does not fully describe our interests. For us the Mediterranean is not a short cut but a main arterial road. We do not challenge Signor Mussolini's words that for Italy “the Mediterranean is her very life,” but we affirm that freedom of communication in these waters is also a vital interest, in a full sense of the word, to the British Commonwealth of Nations. In years gone by the interests

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of the two countries in the Mediterranean have been complementary rather than divergent. On the part of His Majesty's Government there is every desire that those relations should be preserved in the future. Consequently we take note of, and welcome, the assurance that Signor Mussolini gives that Italy does not mean to threaten this route nor propose to interrupt it. Nor do we. Our position is the same. I repeat the assurance that we have no desire to threaten, or intention to attack, any Italian interest in the Mediterranean. In these conditions it should, in our view, be possible for each country to continue to maintain its vital interests in the Mediterranean not only without conflict with each other but even with mutual advantage.

I turn to another important distant part of the world, the Far East. Relations between Japan and China were, not long ago, such as to give rise to some anxiety, but I am happy to say that there have been definite indications lately of a distant easing of the tension. Discussions have been proceeding at Nanking between the two Governments on questions outstanding between them. There appears to be ground for hoping that a revival of the former tense situation will be avoided. His Majesty's Government earnestly trust that this will be the case and that a solution of the matters under discussion will be reached which will put relations between the two countries on a stable and friendly footing. I make no apology for thus showing the interest of His Majesty's Government in the course of these negotiations, although we are not directly engaged in them. In the Far East, where there are so many important and long-established British interests, we cannot afford to watch events with detachment. On that account, and because of our desire to see peace

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established and maintained throughout the world, we wish well to these negotiations.

Having given some outline of the international situation and of its salient features, I want to say a word or two more about the position of our own country and our own Government. The picture that I have given to the House, though admittedly incomplete, shows an international situation serious enough. I am not myself a believer in the inevitability of catastrophe, but I am a believer in this, that the future peace of Europe very largely depends on the part that we play. In this connection I was glad to note the interpretation placed by an important German newspaper on the Gracious Speech. It is there interpreted as this country's resolve once again to take the lead. That is precisely our intention. What is it that we wish to take the lead to secure? European settlement, firmly and securely based, is a vital British interest. We shall obtain no such settlement, we shall not be able to give the restored authority to the League which we seek to give, and are determined to do our utmost to give, unless we possess strength both of purpose and of arms. We shall obtain no such European settlement and no such restored authority to the League without it. Our re-equipment has to be all-embracing. I have always been one—the House has heard it, I am afraid, to weariness—who believes that there will never be enduring peace in the world unless there is an arms agreement, and that the nations will not enjoy the standard of living which should be theirs until such an agreement has been reached. We have the spectacle already in the world of some nations who are beginning to sacrifice the standard of living to the standard of arms.

Today I have another duty. I have to tell the House in plain language the picture of international armaments as it

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is viewed from the windows of the Foreign Office. It is this. Almost every nation in the world—every nation in Europe—is re-arming steadily, vigorously or feverishly. Degrees differ, but all are re-arming. Once again marching men have become a common feature of the landscape in many countries of the world. To that is added the new menace of great squadrons in the air. These things may be the token of man's folly—personally I think they are—but the question that this House has to face is, In such conditions what must this country do? I suggest to all Members of the House two things. First, try to lead the world back into the paths of peace through toleration, the observance of an international order, and respect and support for such an order. In the second place re-equip ourselves—re-arm. In conditions such as exist today—I say this with a full sense of my responsibility—the strength of the armaments of this country is of paramount importance to the preservation of peace. It is almost a platitude that the stronger Britain is today the greater is the certainty of peace. If there are any in the House who do not believe it, I would only ask them to communicate with their own friends, the people who share their own point of view, in the other countries of Europe, more particularly the smaller countries, and they will get the same answer—"Get on with it quickly." If Britain shows strength and unity, there will be peace.

In the programme that I have outlined there are three main elements that I seek to put to the House, for all of which I should like to get the endorsement of the House. The three elements for which we have to strive are, first, the strengthening of the authority of the League, to which I give the House the undertaking that this Government will devote every endeavour. Because there has been one

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failure it is not a reason to say that the world must turn its back on an endeavour which is the only alternative to catastrophe and chaos. If you want fully to appreciate how grim the alternative is, you have only to read the speeches of those who do not like the League. The second is the negotiation of a European settlement and the third is the re-equipment of our own nation. We embark on that task not so much in a spirit of depression at the extent of our difficulty as in a spirit of determination to accomplish that task. In that determination we ask for the support of this House and the support of a united nation.

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By the time Mr. Eden made the following speech on 20th November 1936 to his constituents at Leamington, the European situation had deteriorated further with the denunciation by Germany of the Navigation Clauses of the Treaty of Versailles.

THERE is much discussion in these days of the rival merits of different forms of government. The truth is no doubt that there is no absolute rule of suitability. Differing national characteristics result in differing methods of government. For us, however, the decisive test of any form of government in this country is whether or not all sections of the people living under it are enabled to continue to enjoy the benefits of individual freedom, together with an ever increasing measure of happiness and prosperity. Judged by such a criterion there can be no question but that our own parliamentary form of government has secured remarkable results. We have only to compare the social services of fifty years ago, which then consisted of little more than the Poor Law, with the social system of the present day, which gives wider and more varied forms of assistance than the systems in any other industrial country in the world. Moreover, there can be no question but that it is this country, together with certain other portions of the British Commonwealth, which has been in the forefront of the world's attempt to emerge from the great trade depression. Despite, for instance, the acute and tragic problems of the Special

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Areas it is none the less true that the great mass of people in this country enjoy certain advantages not enjoyed elsewhere, one of the most important of which is a standard of living higher than that which generally prevails in almost any other country. With this is combined the freedom of the individual and his equality before the law—two privileges which the people of this country have long since gained and which they intend to maintain.

It is now eighteen years since the Armistice was signed. We should surely recall what were the objectives which we had before us during the War years. They were these: Freedom and democracy at home; peace abroad. Such should still be our objectives today. They are no less worthy of every attempt to see them realized. The first two—freedom and democracy at home—we enjoy. None but a negligible minority in this country would seek to change them. We must be prepared to defend them. Peace abroad is a less easily attainable goal, since its realization depends not on us alone. Yet in this sphere also we must continue to spare no efforts. For should a major war once again overwhelm the world, nothing is more certain than that the standard of life in every country, whether combatant or not, would suffer, and suffer grievously. This almost universal sense of the horror of war is indeed one of the strongest influences striving on the side of peace. It is hard to believe that any important section of the public anywhere can want war, since war must spell universal impoverishment, if not universal destruction.

I have spoken of our belief in democracy and our determination to maintain it as our own system of government. I would not, however, have you believe that on that account I consider it either necessary or desirable that our likes or

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dislikes for foreign forms of government should prejudice our international friendships or influence the course of our foreign policy. We have said many times of late that we are opposed to the formation of *blocs* in international affairs. That phrase formed part of the communiqué agreed by the Polish Foreign Minister and myself during M. Beck's recent visit to London. What do we mean by that phrase? We mean that we do not want to divide the world into democracies and dictatorships. Nor do we want to divide the world into any antagonistic camps, the followers of which owe allegiance to rival creeds. These, we believe, are not real divisions. Our objective is international co-operation throughout the world—co-operation in which all the States shall participate. It would be wrong and foolish to pretend that nations can only co-operate in international affairs if their systems of government are similar. That is not true, nor is it desirable. There are at Geneva today States co-operating in the organization of peace who have every variety and form of government. That is no hindrance. They can none the less all work together. It would be a tragedy if the League of Nations were to become the home of any ideology, except the ideology of peace. All that we in this country require and expect is that the rule of law should govern international relations, and not the rule of war.

As we observe the present agitated international scene we should do well to bear in mind the system which remains today, at once the largest, the most freely supported and the most peaceful political system in the world—the British Commonwealth of Nations. This Commonwealth is in itself the most daring experiment of the twentieth century. The War, which brought us so close together in a spirit of common

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endeavour and sacrifice, gave a great impetus to the growth of the Commonwealth, the basis of which is the spirit of co-operation. It was no accident that that same spirit of co-operation should have been extended in the British mind from its own miniature League of Nations to the wider League of Nations. The defections from the League which have taken place in recent days have not changed our view that the principles of the League are the best yet devised for the conduct of international relations. These principles are entirely in accord with British ideas, and it would not be our nature to abandon them merely because in some parts of the world they have fallen on rocky ground, and we shall certainly not do so. A League which does not include all the more powerful nations must necessarily be different, be less effective, than a universal League, but the fact that we know that we cannot do everything is no excuse for doing nothing.

If, however, our ideals are to prevail in a rearming world we who hold them must see to it that we are strong. Let us therefore put first things first. Let us be perfectly clear in our own minds that the spirit of co-operation between nations must be preserved and practised by ourselves. Let us also be equally clear that our first task is to equip ourselves as a nation so thoroughly and so strongly that the whole world may see that we mean what we say, and that our conceptions of international order have behind them adequate force. There can be no doubt that attempts to uphold international law have not benefited from the comparative decline of British strength in arms which has existed in recent years. The equilibrium is now being restored—nobody but a would-be aggressor will complain.

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But, it may be asked, for what purpose will these arms be used? Let me once again make the position in this respect perfectly clear. These arms will never be used in a war of aggression. They will never be used for a purpose inconsistent with the Covenant of the League or the Pact of Paris. They may, and if the occasion arose they would, be used in our own defence and in defence of the territories of the British Commonwealth of Nations. They may, and if the occasion arose they would, be used in the defence of France and Belgium against unprovoked aggression in accordance with our existing obligations. They may, and, if a new Western European settlement can be reached, they would, be used in defence of Germany were she the victim of unprovoked aggression by any of the other signatories of such a settlement. Those, together with our Treaty of Alliance with Iraq and our projected treaty with Egypt, are our definite obligations. In addition our armaments *may* be used in bringing help to a victim of aggression in any case where, in our judgement, it would be proper under the provisions of the Covenant to do so. I use the word "may" deliberately, since in such an instance there is no automatic obligation to take military action. It is, moreover, right that this should be so, for nations cannot be expected to incur automatic military obligations save for areas where their vital interests are concerned.

Such are the bases of our policy. I would now turn to a more immediate issue. We are at present engaged in negotiations, confidential and diplomatic at this stage, for repairing the damaged structure of European security. We are attempting as a first stage in that endeavour to replace the Locarno Treaty by a fresh settlement. I will say no

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more at this stage, except that we yesterday circulated a note to our fellow signatories of the previous Locarno Treaty advocating what we regard as reasonable and mutually acceptable conditions in the light of the replies which we have already received from them.

OUR TIES WITH BELGIUM

At a Luncheon given by the International Chamber of Commerce on 27th November 1936, at which the Belgian Prime Minister, M. Van Zeeland, was the guest of honour, Mr. Eden proposed the toast, "The Friendship of Nations, coupled with our friendship for Belgium, and with the name of Monsieur Van Zeeland."

I COUNT it a rare privilege to be invited to propose this toast, in part because I am glad to be able to thank the Prime Minister of Belgium for finding time to honour us with his presence; and in part too because I welcome the opportunity of speaking to you who not only have international friendship at heart, but actively strive to promote it.

Politics and economics, diplomacy and trade are closely interwoven in these post-War years. You therefore know at first hand many of the difficulties of the present international situation, and I feel that I have in you collaborators and sympathizers.

What are we both trying to achieve? The first aim of the foreign policy of His Majesty's Government is the establishment of peace and understanding between the nations. The aim of the International Chamber of Commerce is to promote and facilitate a profitable interchange of goods and service between nations. We are thus natural collaborators: for the greater the success of each, the greater our mutual advantage. On the one hand the preservation of peace is an essential condition to the achievement of your objective. On the other hand, your success in promoting your objec-

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tive is an aid to the maintenance of peace. This is a sphere in which the International Chamber of Commerce has done and can do important service of far greater scope than the mere increase of trade. Freer trade, freer speech, freer thought across the frontiers of Europe. Could we only achieve these things we should have secured an incalculable gain for peace.

The methods of this Chamber are well adapted to this object: for you have created an organization in which national committees representative of commerce, finance, and industry in each country can approach each other and settle their various difficulties out of court. Perhaps the politicians could learn from you with advantage—your methods are quieter than some of my colleagues'. . . .

I now pass to the second part of the toast: "Our friendship for Belgium coupled with the name of Monsieur Van Zeeland."

It is no exaggeration to say that Belgium has a special place in the friendship of the British people. We have many ties in common—ties of history, ties of comradeship, ties of memory for a generation in both countries not yet grown old. In many respects our outlook on world affairs is similar. We are both of us democracies. We are proud of our traditions. We cherish our freedom, both individual and national, and we will not yield it up. M. Van Zeeland and I, and probably the majority of you in this room, belong to a generation which took an active part in the struggle for those principles in which our two countries jointly believe. We have no more sacred trust than to ensure that the cause for which hundreds of thousands of people in our two countries were sacrificed is not lost. How on our part can that be achieved? There is, I believe, no greater service by our

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country to the cause of peace than clarity. Let me therefore on this Anglo-Belgian occasion once again affirm that the independence and integrity of Belgium is a vital interest for this nation and that Belgium could count upon our help were she ever the victim of unprovoked aggression. I say these words deliberately because I am confident that they represent the will of the British people and that to make this plain is a contribution to peace.

It is peace which is the joint objective of our two countries. Nor are our traditions and memories and our methods of government, proud though we both are of each of them, the sole basis of our friendship. We share also the same conceptions of international order; a renunciation of war as an instrument of national policy; a willingness to settle disputes by peaceful means; the acceptance of certain agreed canons of international law. But let there be no mistake: these conceptions are tokens neither of softness nor of cowardice. We believe them to be tokens of civilization. The nations must choose. If they determine to return to the arbitrament of the sword it will be found that the terrible weapons that science has forged can be wielded with no mean courage by peoples who love their freedom, both individual and national, and intend to preserve it. But the cost must be heavy indeed. In this respect there should be no excuse for a repetition of the erroneous estimates of the past. We have today this supreme advantage over 1914—the experience of the War years that lies behind us. The statesmen of the world must know the nemesis that awaits them and their countries if war is ever again loosed upon the earth.

Is there then no alternative? Surely there is. It is a universal realization that the arbitrament of brute force belongs to the animal creation and that the whole effort of

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civilization should be to raise ourselves above the level of the beasts. Surely mankind will choose this better way. It can maintain before itself ideals worthy to be followed. The British people and the Belgian people in this are surely one. In their unremitting pursuit of the maintenance of peace they seek some greater glory than that of battle, some finer inspiration than cannon.

During the last year it has been my privilege to work on a number of occasions with the Prime Minister of Belgium. It would be impossible to imagine a more loyal colleague. Without presumption I hope I may be allowed to say that the stresses through which we have both passed have established a friendship between us that will endure. Belgium owes much to her Prime Minister; Europe owes scarcely less. More than once in recent times—on the occasion of the German occupation of the Rhineland in March, on the occasion of the League's failure over the Abyssinian issue—have we had cause to be profoundly grateful for the courage and statesmanship of Belgium's Prime Minister. In the part which M. Van Zeeland has thus played he has typified the spirit of his nation. We are proud to welcome him here. In all sincerity we wish health and success to Belgium's Prime Minister and to his country prosperity and peace.

THE ABDICATION

Mr. Eden spoke at Bradford on 14th December 1936—three days after the Abdication.

In referring to Spain Mr. Eden pointed out that the situation there was causing grave anxiety owing to the failure of some Governments strictly to observe the Non-Intervention Agreement to which all had subscribed.

THE last fortnight has been for the peoples of the Empire a period of acute anxiety, even of anguish. For every man and woman in this country and in the Dominions, in India and the Colonies, the Crown is not only a symbol of unity, but an object of reverence, of loyalty, and of love. Looking back on these profoundly moving events which we can now view with that slightly clearer perspective which the passage of even a few hours allows, we are left, I think, with certain definite reflections. First a sentiment of profound sympathy for the man who was so lately our King. Every one of us wish him from the bottom of our hearts a long and happy life. The second reflection is that we welcome our new King and Queen with renewed affection and an added loyalty, determined to do all that lies in the power of each one of us to serve them in the reign which they have begun with Empire-wide goodwill. The third reflection is a deep sense of gratitude to the man upon whom has fallen a burden of almost unprecedented responsibility in recent weeks—the Prime Minister. Mr. Baldwin has by his handling of so delicate and so critical an issue earned the thanks of the nation. Perhaps I may be allowed to add that a debt of gratitude is also due to the Leader of the Opposi-

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tion, Mr. Attlee, who, in a position which had its difficulties for him also, has so well played his part. Nor should we forget the Home Secretary, Sir John Simon, who had by virtue of his office his own share of responsibilities, so ably and so quietly discharged.

But perhaps the most remarkable feature of the crisis through which we have passed has been the steadfastness and forbearance of the great British public. At a time of acute personal distress they have once again displayed those qualities of coolness, dignity, wisdom, and restraint which have characterized them in the past at critical moments in the Empire's history. And so on this occasion the people of this country, while fully sympathizing with the human issues involved, have given first place to broad national considerations. In so doing they have given expression to that innate political instinct which is perhaps their greatest gift.

You will wish me, I am sure, to give you tonight some impressions of the international situation. In recent speeches I have endeavoured to outline as clearly as possible the foreign policy of His Majesty's Government, to recall our commitments, to re-emphasize our objectives. I have done this deliberately because of a profound conviction that in the restless and anxious state of present-day Europe this country has an especial part to play, and that the best service that it can render to the world is by making its purpose clear and pursuing that purpose with a calm but vigilant perseverance. But that is not all. If the Government of this country is to exert its maximum influence in world affairs it is imperative that it should speak for a united nation. Time was when the broad lines of this country's foreign policy were not the subject of party controversy. I believe that today we are making progress towards a return to such

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conditions, despite differences of emphasis and detail. An impartial observer must have been impressed by the steady growth during the last few months of united opinion on vital matters of foreign policy. I welcome each and every manifestation of such unity, for without unity there can be no strength.

But if the Government is to preserve that national unity and to deserve it, it is incumbent upon us to take the people of this country as far as possible into our confidence, to tell them plain truths in plain language, so that there can be no misunderstanding between us. I have spoken of the value to Europe of this country's calm. By that I mean a calm based not upon ignorance of the facts, which might be dangerous, but a calm due to a full knowledge and understanding of the position. This is the best possible spirit in which to meet difficulties.

Events abroad are speeding on their course, and they compel our serious and vigilant attention. In the face of these let me endeavour to name a few points on which unity of understanding and unity of action seem to me important. Let us first win an ever larger body of opinion to reject those dangerous doctrines which would have us divide the world into dictatorships of the right and left. This country will have none of either. Nor will it align its foreign policy with any group of States because they support the one or the other. We do not believe that we should be serving either internal peace in this country or external peace in Europe or elsewhere by so doing. To further our own national interests, the greatest of which is peace, we need no such doctrines and no slogans. Man is surely too intelligent for his scope and opportunity to be limited to a choice of such crude alternatives. Therefore I repeat that we reject these

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extreme doctrines for our own home consumption. We are, however, not only willing, but sincerely anxious, to live on peaceful—more than that—on cordial terms with those who practise these doctrines in their own countries. In our view the test of co-operation in foreign affairs is not the form of government of this or that country, but the country's willingness to co-operate sincerely for peace in the international sphere. Our relations with other nations are thus guided by their willingness to keep peace with their neighbours and to observe the treaties which are framed to keep the peace. Observance of treaties and willingness to resort to free negotiation in case of disagreement constitute together the only true basis of international confidence. That is assuredly one of the lessons the world should have learnt in the last few months. Admittedly, treaties in themselves which are made by human hands are not sacrosanct. They are capable of improvement, as are all human beings, but there must be some sanctity about the observance of solemn undertakings. There must be a limit to unilateral denunciations or we shall reach a point where force and force alone is to be the sole arbiter of international relations and where no treaty will be worth the paper on which it is written. Tearing up a scrap of paper led to the war of 1914. If Europe is to be littered with scraps of paper in 1936 and thereafter, nobody can look ahead with any confidence. I repeat, therefore, that international relations are guided not by forms of government but by the manner in which governments observe their undertakings.

Now let me speak for a moment of events in Western Europe. You will, I am sure, have learned with the utmost satisfaction of the declaration made by the French Minister for Foreign Affairs in the Chamber of Deputies on 4th December. M. Delbos stated in the name of the French Govern-

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ment that all the forces of France on land, on sea, and in the air would be spontaneously and immediately used for the defence of Great Britain in the event of an unprovoked aggression. He added that this declaration applied also to Belgium.

It has been suggested in certain quarters that this declaration and my statement at Leamington on 20th November that if the occasion arose our arms would be used in the defence of France and Belgium in the case of unprovoked aggression, in accordance with our existing obligations, represents some new departure or implies some alliance, or that declarations of this kind were incorrect in the course of a negotiation involving other Powers.

This, however, is not so. My statement was but a repetition of the undertaking His Majesty's Government gave to France and Belgium after the denunciation by Germany of the Treaty of Locarno last March; and, so far as the French Government's declaration is concerned, it reaffirms the undertaking given in the proposals which were agreed to in London on 19th March last in order to deal with the situation created by Germany's repudiation of the Treaty of Locarno and of the Rhineland demilitarized zone.

Thus neither M. Delbos's statement nor mine represents any new departure, nor do they conceal any hidden intention to form any exclusive alliance, nor do they suggest a policy of *blocs*. Let me emphasize once again, it is not in our minds, nor, I am convinced, is it in the minds of the French Government, to seek to come to any exclusive arrangement. Far from it; we desire, and should cordially welcome, the co-operation of Germany not only in a Western agreement, but in European affairs generally. This country has made that clear many times in these post-War years,

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not only by words but by deeds. So far are we from wishing to encircle Germany that we seek for her co-operation with other nations in the economic and financial as well as in the political sphere. We want neither *blocs* nor barriers in Europe, nor, we are convinced, were there freedom of thought, of speech, of trade across the frontiers would there be any.

In a recent speech at Leamington I emphasized the urgent need for again bringing our defences up to a standard commensurate with our world-wide interests and responsibilities, and sought once again to define the occasions on which those arms might be employed. There are in the world certain vital British interests and it is a contribution to peace that those should be clearly made known to all. This I sought to do at Leamington and I have nothing to add or subtract from the definition there given. Yet if I were to say that Britain's interests in peace are geographically limited I should be giving a false impression. If our vital interests are situated in certain clearly definable areas our interest in peace is world-wide and there is a simple reason for this. The world has now become so small—and every day with the march of science it becomes smaller—that a spark in some sphere comparatively remote from our own interests may become a conflagration sweeping a continent or a hemisphere. We must therefore be watchful at all times and in all places. We cannot disinterest ourselves from this or that part of the world in a vague hope that happenings in that area will not affect us. We must neither mislead others nor be misled ourselves by any of those comfortable doctrines that we can live secure in a Western European glass-house. It is for this reason that I have again and again insisted that the foreign policy of our country, with its many and comprehensive interests, must work for a comprehensive

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settlement. Nothing short of that will give us the peace and the confidence that we so ardently desire.

How, then, is this settlement to be achieved? Detailed instruments and limited agreements will no doubt help towards this result, but the realities of the problem go even deeper than that. If the world is to enjoy an assurance of lasting peace there must be a reversal of certain tendencies which dominate world politics today. Too large a part of the world's wealth is now being spent on armaments. It is never wholly convincing to be told by this nation or by that, "We are poorer than we should be," when at the self-same time vast sums are being spent on rearmament or maybe the whole national economy is being strained and twisted to that end. If the world means to persist in rearmament it will persist in its own impoverishment. The world would act wisely were it to turn from armaments competition to economic co-operation. That is a change which we wish to see and to which we are prepared to contribute our share. We showed by the part we played in the recent three-power Monetary Agreement the basis upon which we thought progress was possible. We are anxious to see those lines followed up, and to see international conditions created in which economically all nations can have greater opportunities, can hope to raise their standard of life. If a lasting settlement of world difficulties could be reached, including—and this is indispensable—an arms agreement, our help would be willingly and indeed whole-heartedly given. But—and this is fundamental—this country cannot be expected to render help to others either in the economic or in the financial sphere if the only result of such action is to be a further piling up of armaments and a consequent further stress and strain upon the fabric of world peace.

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I will now turn to an aspect of the international situation which is uppermost in all our minds: Spain.

Since the beginning of this tragic Spanish conflict the Government have initiated or supported every endeavour to limit the conflict or to bring it to an end. That is why we warmly seconded the French Government's initiative in favour of a non-intervention agreement in the early days of August; that is why we have done our utmost to sustain that policy ever since. It is true that non-intervention has not worked as well as we could have wished. There have been leakages, even grave breaches in the agreement, but that is no reason for abandoning the principle. Those who advocate its abandonment must face the alternative, and it is immeasurably grave. M. Blum has spoken of his conviction that the non-intervention initiative saved a European war last August. Is M. Blum right in that conviction? I, for one, am certainly not prepared to disagree with him. No one can tell now what would have happened, since we did in fact have both the initiative and the agreement. But certain it is at the very least, that this initiative and the efforts that followed it saved Europe from the gravest risk of a conflict.

Once again, however, the Spanish tragedy is creating grave international anxieties. Why is this? It is because the nations are not observing in the letter and in the spirit the agreement to which they came last August. It was in the conditions thus revealed that the French Government and ourselves have within the last few days attempted a fresh initiative with the dual object of making the non-intervention agreement really effective, and of offering mediation to bring hostilities to an end. You will perhaps have seen

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that the United States Government has issued a message of sympathetic support for our endeavours. In doing so they have set an admirable example to other nations more directly concerned, whose responsibilities in this matter are infinitely heavier. We feel entitled to look to these nations for their collaboration in a work which is one of European appeasement. For let us be clear about this, if we, the nations of Europe, cannot collaborate to deal with the Spanish problem, then we shall be moving into deeper and more dangerous waters.

To sum up our attitude towards the Spanish conflict, I would say that our main immediate concern is that the conflict now unfortunately raging in that country should be confined within the narrowest possible limits, in the hope it may be brought to a speedy end. This attitude is in conformity with the deep interest we feel in the maintenance of the integrity of Spain and Spanish possessions. For I need perhaps hardly say that it is a consideration of great moment to us that when Spain emerges from her present troubles that integrity should remain intact and unmenaced from any quarter.

There is a spirit of violence abroad in Europe today which bodes ill for the future unless all the restraining and responsible influences in humanity are brought to bear to check it. I believe that our nation if it exerts its full influence and is prepared to make sacrifices quickly and effectively to equip itself strongly, can yet render a great service to itself and to others before it is too late. I believe too that if we show strength and unity in this nation we shall find an ever widening response elsewhere. Humanity may be discouraged and uncertain where to turn in the maze of events which are

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unfolding themselves before its eyes, but it has no desire to destroy itself. If we share a determination to avert that catastrophe it is our duty to spare no effort to help mankind towards that state of peace and understanding among the nations which is indispensable to the survival of civilization.

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Speaking at the Foreign Press Association dinner on 12th January 1937 Mr. Eden again reviewed the international situation.

I MUST begin by apologizing for having been the cause, the very unwilling cause, of postponing your Annual Dinner for 1936, but I am highly sensible of the compliment you have paid me in deciding to fast to this extent at any rate on my account. Now that we have broken the fast together in this very hospitable not to say sumptuous manner allow me at the outset to express my thanks for the opportunity you have given me of addressing this very important and influential body—the Foreign Press Association in London.

I should like to pay your President, Dr. Litauer, this tribute. After having twice accepted his invitations, last April and again last December, I have twice failed him, but in spite of that he has shone two qualities which eminently qualify him for the post he occupies—perseverance and understanding. Perhaps he will allow me to take these two qualities which he has so markedly displayed towards me as the text of the remarks which I shall address to you tonight.

As I look at the situation in the world generally at present, and at that of my own country in particular, I cannot think of a better motto for a British Foreign Secretary at this time than the cultivation of perseverance and understanding. Perseverance in pursuing those objects which will promote a general settlement and understanding of the views

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of all nations who must contribute to that settlement.

You will expect me no doubt in my first public speech in the New Year to make not only what is in effect a New Year resolution, but also to speak to you of the present international situation. I do not think that I can make a better New Year resolution than to determine to follow a policy of perseverance and understanding. In the words which I address to you I hope to be able to indicate in what directions that resolution is likely to be put into practice.

It would be foolish to pretend that we open the New Year without many disturbing and indeed menacing factors in Europe. There is the situation in Spain, which continues to give rise to the greatest anxiety throughout the world. The views of His Majesty's Government have been so often and so clearly expressed that I propose to say very little on that subject tonight. Suffice it to say this. We are a democratic country. We believe that it is for the inhabitants of any country to decide what system of government they prefer. It is a matter for them, and for no one else. We wish to see imposed no system of government, either our own or any other, on the Spanish people. We believe that any such effort would be unjustified, and even were it to succeed could bring no lasting peace. It is for that reason that we have discouraged and shall so far as lies in our power continue to discourage any foreign intervention in the affairs of that country. I know that there are some who believe that as the outcome of this civil war Spain inevitably must have a government either Fascist or Communist. That is not our belief. On the contrary, we believe that neither of these forms of government being indigenous to Spain, neither is likely to endure. Spain will in time evolve her

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own Spanish form of government. The less the foreigner interferes the shorter that time will be.

One of the most disturbing tendencies in the international situation which became pronounced in 1936 was the tendency to divide Europe into two opposing camps, divided according to two extreme political doctrines. I hope and think that this tendency shows signs of diminishing. There is, for instance, the exchange of assurances between this country and Italy which is directed against no country, and which has been welcomed by other Mediterranean Powers. His Majesty's Government have again and again stated on public platforms in this country that we repudiate any division of Europe into the supporters of rival ideologies. Not only would the widespread acceptance of such a fatalistic doctrine be highly dangerous to peace, but in our judgement it does not correspond to realities. Human nature is far too rich and too diversified to be hemmed in within such limitations.

We believe that it is essential for peace that the full moral and political weight of this country, and here I think I am interpreting the views of the whole of the English-speaking world, should be thrown against this doctrine of exclusiveness. The doctrine of the class war has never at any rate been accepted by the British people because we are practical enough to see that it makes no sense. The interests of classes are not exclusive, but complementary. In the same way we see that this further extension of the doctrine, which would divide nations according to hard and fast political creeds, is equally false. The reason that we treasure parliamentary democracy and intend to put our whole force behind it is because we believe that it is essentially a practical system. Democracy is not a theoretical doctrine invented in the

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study; it is a slow and steady growth to which men of all sorts and conditions throughout many generations have made their contribution. It represents the innumerable facets of human nature. We are told that it is not heroic and that Europe is now entering on the heroic stage. By all means let us have heroism. But let us regard Europe as a land for heroes to live in, not merely to die in. Let us not confuse heroism and heroics. Let us seek that quieter heroism which is none the less real because it is restrained, which is more generous because it can see qualities of heroism and willingness for self-sacrifice in people of every race and creed, and which regards co-operation with all races and creeds as essential to the general welfare of the world. A political democracy is sometimes regarded as a half-way house between dictatorships of the Right or Left. It is no such thing. It is in another street altogether. But it is ready enough to live on terms of good neighbourliness with the inhabitants of all other streets.

As I have said, it is rather the habit to describe our British tradition of parliamentary government as an easy-going mean between extremes, suited to a nation of shopkeepers. Now, as Aristotle expounded in treatises that we have all read and forgotten, the happy mean is not a mediocre thing deficient in all the flashing qualities of the extremes on either side of it. It has a unique quality of its own derived from a just proportion or harmony. Courage you will remember, is a mean between foolhardiness and timidity. Moreover, this I claim, and it should never be forgotten, that parliamentary democracy represents not a mere passive, agnostic, disbelief in more extreme forms of government, but a positive creed.

In the last century it was one of our great invisible ex-

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ports. It was transplanted, and for many reasons—perhaps the soil did not suit it, or it encountered storms before it was well rooted—at any rate in some of these countries it has not thriven. But we have not lost faith in it. Needless to say—for tolerance is one of parliamentary democracy's chief characteristics—we have no wish to impose our institutions where they are not wanted. Equally we have no intention of allowing them to be uprooted here. The price of liberty is eternal vigilance, I would add, “and constant self-sacrifice.”

It is sometimes said, “You English are so complacent, you are giving your young people no political creed outside their own comfort to believe in and make sacrifices for.” That I vigorously deny. We have something worth living for, something that we are determined to preserve for our children. Undoubtedly work and self-sacrifice are needed if we are to be sure of preserving our liberties. We in this country do not compel men to serve their country, at any rate in times of peace. Our attitude to this matter was put once and for all by Nelson in his signal, “England expects,” she does not compel.

There are then these two aspects of our political philosophy: first, that it is a positive doctrine, and second, that, though we make no great parade of our devotion to it, there is no doubt of our readiness to make the necessary sacrifices to preserve it.

I have dealt at some length on the general tendencies of political thought in this country, and for this reason. The Press of the world is an immense force—it can be a force for good. It can be a force for evil. I believe that you all wish to use it for good. But even journalists, if I may be permitted a sufficiently daring observation, are not perfect.

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We live in an age when there is always a tendency to deduce national policies from isolated sentences, irrespective of their contexts. I have noticed examples of this in recent months. We are told that Great Britain is moving towards one country, away from another. That is a distortion of the truth. There is no country which we would not be willing to move towards if by so doing we and that country could assist in securing a general settlement of the strain and anxieties to which we are all subjected. We desire the circle of our friends and collaborators to be as wide and all-embracing as possible. There is so much to be done that can be done, but if it is to be done all the nations must enter on 1937 in this spirit. These are the principles, simple and straightforward principles that govern British policy, principles which are innate in the British character and have played a chief part in moulding the constitution of our own country.

We do not believe in conflict. We believe in co-operation. The world has surely learnt enough, in its long history, to know that by patient collaboration man can steadily increase his standard of living. But that can only be done by collaboration. It can never be done by war. Distrust, hatred, and the armaments to which these give birth can only hinder its realization. Those who believe in international co-operation—as we do—wishing to leave no nation out, do so because they are profoundly convinced that in that way, and only in that way, can they fulfil the first and greatest duty of statesmanship, to increase the happiness and prosperity of the people.

I have been happy to read Herr Hitler's statement to the Diplomatic Corps, which is published in this morning's paper. He says: "Present worries ought to serve as a warning

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for all nations in time to recognize the dangers threatening world peace, thus promoting a real understanding and reconciliation among the nations which will make possible for all a continuance of their economic existence, guaranteeing the prosperity and prospects of humanity as a whole."

His Majesty's Government warmly reciprocate those sentiments. Surely the world is not so bankrupt that it can find no way of giving practical force to what, it seems, is the common aim of us all. That at any rate must be the task to which we must devote ourselves in the coming year, and so far as the people of this country are concerned, I can assure you that it is a task to which they will bend their most earnest and united endeavours.

How is this to be achieved? If progress is to be real, we must wish to see it realized both in the political and in the economic sphere—the one reacts upon the other. Unless there is political confidence there can be no real economic recovery in Europe. Moreover, economic distress is in itself a danger to peace. All friends of peace, therefore, must wish to see that distress relieved.

We in this country, as you know, are now engaged in rearmament on a considerable, indeed a formidable scale. That rearmament is gathering momentum. In time it must impose a strain upon our national finances and national prosperity as it is already doing elsewhere. Yet no other policy was open to us in a rapidly rearming world. The British nation have no desire to spend money upon armaments, yet let there be no mistake, in existing conditions they can, and if need be will, show as stubborn determination as any other nation in the re-equipment which they regard as vital to their national safety. But that is not the

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road we wish to travel. There is a better way. We definitely prefer butter to guns, and we are prepared to do our best by economic co-operation and by working for European appeasement to secure that others have butter too in a world which has no need of guns.

Tonight in the opening days of the New Year you will wish me to give you perhaps some forecast of what awaits the world in 1937. The choice is surely sufficiently clear. It is for the nations to determine. On the one hand, we can take a great stride forward. By increase of international understanding, by free co-operation between the peoples, by a reduction of the barriers that hamper international trade and intercourse, by a genuine attempt to restrain our sentiments, however deep and strong they may be, in favour of this or that ideology, we can better the international situation and increase the world's prosperity and happiness. On the other hand, if we withdraw within ourselves, increase our individual isolation, if we continue to pile up armaments to the utmost of our economic strength and beyond it, we shall perpetuate the evils from which we suffer today and bring the world nearer to an even greater disaster than that from which it is only just beginning to recover.

That way lies madness. There may have been a time when nations could be independent and self-sufficing, but that day is long past. No nation today can prosper on the ruin of another. Let us recognize this fundamental fact that in the modern world nations are all members one of another, economically if not politically. If we once base our policies on this fundamental fact we shall have gone far to find a solution of the seemingly insoluble problems which now confront mankind.

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In a communication addressed by the British Government to the German Government in May 1936 Germany had been asked, among other things, what view she now took of the continued maintenance of the still operative clauses of the Versailles Treaty, whether she intended to respect the existing territorial and political status of Europe except as it could be modified by negotiation, and whether she would accompany the negotiation of a Western Air Pact with a regional agreement for the limitation of air strengths. No official reply was ever received, but Germany's uncompromising attitude was made clear by Herr Hitler in his speech to the Reichstag on 30th January 1937.

The British rearmament programme was announced by the Prime Minister on 11th February.

The Non-Intervention Committee continued to sit in London. In a speech at Liverpool on 12th April 1937 Mr. Eden again gave a broad review of affairs.

EVER since the outbreak of the Spanish conflict His Majesty's Government have had two main objectives before them. First to prevent that conflict from spreading beyond the borders of Spain, and second to preserve, whatever the final outcome of the conflict, the political independence and territorial integrity of Spain. I believe that those two objectives commend themselves to the overwhelming majority of the people of this country. In the furtherance of them we have from the first supported the policy of non-intervention. No doubt many gibes can be hurled at the policy of non-intervention and at the work of the

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Non-Intervention Committee. It can be said—and said with truth—that there have been breaches, flagrant breaches, of the Agreement. Despite the Agreement both sides are using materials from abroad; despite the Agreement there are foreign nationals fighting on both sides. All this and more can be said in criticism, and yet when all that can be said has been said a broad gain remains. The policy of non-intervention has limited and bit by bit reduced the flow of foreign intervention in arms and men into Spain. Even more important, the existence of that policy, the knowledge that many governments, despite all discouragement, were working for it, has greatly reduced the risks of general war. These risks were considerable in the early autumn of last year. They may become considerable again, but they should not and need not because of the existence of the Non-Intervention Agreement and of the scheme of control and the scheme of observation which has been worked out. Let us face the alternatives to non-intervention. They must be bluntly stated. An open and limitless competition in the supply of arms and munitions and even men to Spain, stimulated by the almost frenzied support of rival ideologies. Where must that have led Europe? What rôle was there for this country in such a feeding of the flames in a foreign civil strife? Unless we were ourselves prepared to intervene in Spain, ourselves willing to send men to participate in that civil war—and no one in this country advocates that course—then clearly there was only one rôle for us; to continue to work patiently, persistently for the limitation and at last the cessation of all outside intervention in Spain, for the sake of the unhappy people of Spain and for the sake of Europe.

Let us not belittle what has been achieved. After infinite

labour, not only has an agreement been reached which the nations have accepted, but more than that an elaborate system of observation has been evolved in respect of which each nation has to bear its burden of responsibility and expense. Certainly nothing on such a scale has ever been attempted before.

His Majesty's Government take the view that the new agreement for the supervision of the Spanish land and sea frontiers, which will shortly come into operation, can be made effective in checking the dispatch of foreign nationals, arms, munitions and war material to either of the contending forces in the Spanish Civil War. Once that agreement is in force the prolonged period of rumour, of charge and counter-charge will be at an end. We shall be able to ascertain facts and no longer have to deal with hearsay evidence.

If, however, reports should then be received from the competent observers under the proposed scheme that violations of the agreements are still taking place and that foreign volunteers are continuing to arrive in Spain in order to participate in the civil war, His Majesty's Government would view the situation thus created with the gravest concern. It would, in their opinion, and no doubt in that of the other participating governments in the Non-Intervention Agreement, be calculated to produce a new and dangerous situation, and one which it must be in the interest of every peace-seeking Power in Europe to determine to avoid.

What will be the ultimate outcome of this Spanish conflict? He would be a bold man or a poorly informed one who would hazard a prophecy of a speedy victory for either side as at present constituted. Nothing is more certain than that this is a conflict in respect of which the short view is

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likely to be the wrong view. There are some people in this country who apprehend that the outcome of this civil war in Spain will see that country dominated by Communism if the Government wins, by Fascism if the insurgents win. They further fear that the future policy of Spain will be dominated by the leading foreign protagonists of those two creeds. I am convinced that these apprehensions are misplaced. Whatever the final outcome of this strife, and there may be many phases which have a transient air of finality before that outcome is reached, the Spanish people will after this civil war, as for centuries before it, continue to display that proud independence, that almost arrogant individualism which is a distinctive characteristic of the race. There are twenty-four million reasons why Spain will never for long be dominated by the forces or controlled by the advice of any foreign Power, and they are the twenty-four million Spaniards that today inhabit war-ridden Spain. Six months ago I told the House of Commons of my conviction that intervention in Spain was both bad humanity and bad politics. Nothing that has happened since that date has caused me to modify that judgement; some events have caused me to confirm it.

When at last this terrible Spanish conflict is ended is it not conceivable, indeed probable, that the Spanish people will like best those who have fought least on their soil, will feel scant gratitude for those who have killed fellow Spaniards, and will perhaps best understand the motives of that nation which has confined intervention to the saving of many thousands of Spanish lives?

Can we not learn another lesson from this Spanish conflict? It teaches us not only the horror of modern war, but also its resemblance to wars that have gone before. As

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many at the outbreak of the Great War in 1914 thought that the conflict would be short, so many judged that this Spanish Civil War would be short. Events have falsified the prophets in both these instances. Is there not in this fact, however unwelcome in itself, an influence favourable to the preservation of peace in the future? Everyone now knows that a war of long duration means the ruin of victor and vanquished alike, and if the lesson of recent experience is that there can be no short war within or between the States of Europe, will not this knowledge further buttress peace?

I would now turn to another part of Europe and to a capital where three countries recently discussed the European situation, including this question of non-intervention. I refer to the meeting of the Powers of the Little Entente in Belgrade. The communiqué issued at its close was one the purport and tenor of which the Government and people of this country could cordially endorse. What did the Little Entente Powers say? They have reaffirmed their devotion to the League of Nations and to the principles on which it is based. They declared their determination to "continue to work for a general reconciliation of all European States and for the avoidance of war," and they added wisely: "this spirit of conciliation is not a sign of weakness and the three States are at all times ready to defend their national rights." Each and all of these statements represent our policy also with respect to the problems with which we are faced. The Little Entente Powers went on to state that they were "firmly opposed to any kind of international ideological conflict, and would not join either of the *blocs* to which such conflict might give rise." This is indubitably the determination of this country also. "The domestic

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régime of independent States," the three Powers continue, "must be mutually respected. This principle dictates the attitude of the three States towards the Spanish conflict." It dictates ours also. Finally the three Powers say they "have strictly applied all measures recommended by the Non-Intervention Committee and would welcome all new efforts to make non-intervention effective and to limit the area of potential danger spots." We cordially concur. I have quoted this communiqué to you at some length to illustrate that we are not alone in the view that we have often expressed of the principles that should govern the conduct of foreign affairs. Many share our view.

None the less we are aware of course that we are sometimes criticized for our unwillingness to join any *bloc* in Europe serving any ideology. We are told that such an attitude constitutes a refusal to face realities. Yet for us there is a deeper, a more significant reality which was nowhere better stated than in the proceedings of the Imperial Conference of 1926. Describing the status of Great Britain and the Dominions it was there stated: "The British Empire is not founded upon negations. It depends essentially, if not formally, on positive ideals. Free institutions are its life-blood. Free co-operation is its instrument. Peace, security, and progress are among its objects." As in 1926, so today, our purpose remains unchanged.

I sometimes think that less than justice is done to the motives which have determined the policy of His Majesty's Government in the succession of crises which have followed hard upon one another in recent months. We are told that we are insufficiently firm or that our policy lacks precision and is one of mere drift. These criticisms seem to me to ignore certain fundamental truths. To paraphrase a saying

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of Lord Kitchener's quoted in the third volume of Mr. Winston Churchill's great life of Marlborough: "One cannot conduct foreign affairs as one would, but only as one can." Our attitude is due not to carelessness or indifference but to a scrupulous concern for our responsibilities. We are acutely conscious of the responsibilities of this country at the present moment of crisis and turmoil in Europe. We are acutely conscious that a false step by His Majesty's Government at this juncture might have consequences of the utmost gravity. We are not going to take a step the consequences of which must be decisive one way or the other unless we are convinced that it is both right and wise. We are certainly not going to take action which will divide Europe into two *blocs*, both heavily armed and rapidly increasing their arms and keenly suspicious of one another. Have those who advocate greater provision and perhaps more dashing courses for our foreign policy satisfied themselves that what they recommend would not lead to that very dangerous situation which it should be our object to avoid? Indeed, I sometimes wonder whether certain of our critics in this country have weighed the full significance of the courses they urge upon the Government and realized that some of them might in fact enlist us in that very ideological conflict which they rightly join us in denouncing.

I would suggest that any observer of foreign policy at this time, before he decides to advocate this or that course, should ask himself: "What would be its effect? Will it in fact further the division of Europe into two armed camps with my country in one of them?" For let us never forget that this problem of armaments must be considered in relation to policy.

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I have said on several occasions recently that our rearmament is a means to an end and not an end in itself. No policy could be more insane than a race in armaments for its own sake, which could only end in general destruction. It is imperative, while we are rearming on a scale unprecedented in this country in time of peace, that we should preserve a sanity and balance in our outlook, that we should refrain from sabre-rattling and provocation, that we should keep constantly in view our own very great responsibility as a nation, or I should prefer to put it, as one of a group of nations, to help others to think in terms of co-operation rather than of antagonism. If we and other nations think merely in terms of armaments, we shall find ourselves thinking in terms of what divides us and not what should unite us. It is easy and popular to rattle the sabre, it is far more difficult and unpopular to face the criticism of being poor-spirited because we refuse to lead Europe over the precipice. I hear it said from time to time that the policy of His Majesty's Government is lacking in precision. Surely that is the short view and not the long one. It is alien to the British temperament to lay down elaborate and detailed lines of policy for the immediate future.

Nor is it possible to devise such lines to meet every contingency in a rapidly changing world, but it is alien to common sense to shirk the broad lines of policy for a longer period ahead. It is the principles of policy which can be stated, and not the details, and it is the principles which matter. The principles are simple and not at the mercy of every wind that blows; the details are not only immensely complicated but subject to constant readjustment. One of these principles to which I would call your attention is this.

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There can only be good relations if countries can agree on policies which take account not only of their own rights, but of the rights of others. And we shall not take account of those rights unless we attempt to understand them. One of the worst enemies of understanding is the current jargon of politics, the kind of propaganda which by constant repetition tries to turn a half-truth into the whole truth. It is so easy and so misleading to claim all the virtues for your own school of thought, for it must necessarily follow that all the vices belong to the other school. It is so misleading to see nothing but bad under the dictatorships or for the latter to see nothing but a glaring red light when the word democracy is mentioned. Each nation in Europe is grappling with its own set of problems and striving to find its own solution. So long as the principle of live and let live in international relations is adhered to, these individual attempts should work out their own solutions. That is the principle which has guided us in the Spanish conflict and it is the only possible principle to be applied to all countries, no matter what we may feel about the internal development which is taking place in any country. The worst possible principle is the assumption that one nation cannot secure its own internal order or its own internal happiness save by imposing a similar order elsewhere. We shall have gained much when it comes to be realized that toleration is itself a sign of strength.

There will be no confidence in peace until this doctrine of live and let live, of non-intervention in the affairs of others, is both preached and practised. What is delaying the return of confidence is not only actual intervention across the frontiers of other countries, but the fear that such intervention may take place. In this respect both open

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and disguised intervention are very much the same thing. Let the nations rid themselves of the idea that they should strive for a Pax Germanica, a Pax Gallica, a Pax Italica, or even a Pax Britannica. The only sure peace is not a national but an international peace to which each nation makes its contribution because it recognizes that therein lies its own enduring interest. International peace based on an international order with the nations leagued together to preserve it; if to some people today this ideal seems as distant as the Millennium, let all at any rate agree to take the first steps in that direction. Of these steps the first and the most important is for the nations of Europe to leave one another to work out their own national solutions in their own way. Such a policy of self-denial would soon create an international atmosphere in which true collaboration could thrive. Is it too much to hope that even at this late hour the policy of non-intervention in Spain may be seen by all who have subscribed to it to be the policy that suits their own interests best? If the conflict in Spain is regarded not as testing-ground for national rivalries and intervention but as the field for co-operation and non-intervention, the trials which the Spanish people are now undergoing may lead not to a sharpening of antagonisms, which can do nothing but harm to all, but to a realization of the advantages of co-operation which would be an infinite benefit to all.

FROM CHINA TO SPAIN

Before Parliament rose at the end of the summer of 1937 Mr. Eden made a comprehensive survey of the international situation. In his speech to the House of Commons on 19th July the subjects dealt with included developments in the Spanish war, the situation in the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, the Far East, the future of the League, and the European outlook as a whole.

I AM credibly informed that the Parliamentary holidays are drawing near, and it has been represented to me through the usual channels that the moment is perhaps appropriate for a survey of the world situation. That is a formidable task, but I am prepared to attempt it with the indulgence of the House. Only a few weeks ago a foreign affairs debate, initiated by the Right Honourable Gentleman the Member for Caithness [Sir A. Sinclair] took place, and if from what I have to say today I omit certain parts of the world, that is not due to the fact that the Government have suddenly become disinterested in them, but because for the moment I have nothing to add to what was said only a few weeks ago. It might be for the convenience of the Committee if I were to begin with the situation in the Far East; then to say something about recent developments in the Spanish situation and make certain references which I desire to make on behalf of the Government with regard to the situation in the Mediterranean and the Red Sea; and, having referred to our relations with Egypt, to speak of the League's future, and finally, to say a word about the European outlook as a whole.

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If we may deal with the Far East first, the situation there is confused and anxious and it is difficult even to describe it in precise terms. The causes and the responsibilities for the actual origin of the first clash, which took place on the night of 7th-8th July, remain uncertain, and the course of negotiations which have been in progress locally is not fully known to us. None the less, all the indications encourage us to believe that the present situation, grave as its possibilities undoubtedly are, was not deliberately provoked by either Government. It does not make the situation less dangerous in its potentialities, but if it is right it is an important element in assessing the possibilities of a solution. I stated in the House on 14th July that certain terms which had been referred to as an agreement by the Japanese Embassy at Peking had been communicated to the Japanese authorities by Chinese representatives. The Japanese Government, I am informed, have since intimated to the Chinese Government that they expect them not to interfere with the execution of an agreement reached locally on 11th July. The terms of that agreement are not known to us, but I understand them to include an apology for the original incident, punishment of those responsible, and the withdrawal of Chinese troops across the river at the actual scene of the incident. The first of these conditions appears already to have been carried out. Meanwhile, both the Japanese and Chinese Governments have assured us that they are anxious to avoid an extension of the trouble, and we have expressed to both Governments our earnest hope that the situation should not be aggravated, and that a peaceful settlement may be reached.

The Committee will appreciate that there is obvious cause for apprehension in the measures reported on both

sides of the movement of large bodies of troops nearer to the scene of the original incident. Some of the Press reports of these movements have exaggerated the position, but it is a fact that considerable reinforcements have been sent to the Japanese troops in the Province of Hopei, and on the Chinese side troop movements have also taken place, but we have been assured, in answer to questions which we have put, that these are purely precautionary and defensive, and that there is no intention whatever of starting hostilities. There is, however, the Committee will agree, clearly danger inherent in the situation, and His Majesty's Government have been in communication in consequence not only with the Chinese and Japanese Governments but also with other governments on the general situation. The United States Government and the French Government, both of them, have, I know, like ourselves, expressed their concern and their hope for a peaceful settlement. It may be that this is most likely to be reached between the two parties without attempts by third parties to intervene, beyond showing, as they must, their natural concern and interest in the maintenance of peace. None the less we have made it clear in both capitals that if there is any way in which His Majesty's Government can contribute to a solution they will be pleased to lend any assistance that may be in their power.

It is a matter of the greatest regret to us that these unfortunate incidents should have arisen at this moment, when it seemed justifiable to hope that the situation in the Far East was entering on a better phase. We ourselves enjoy very good relations with both the Governments concerned, and we do not believe that the interests of those two Far Eastern nations need conflict. We have watched with sympathy during recent years the efforts which China has been

making to develop her vast resources, and at the same time we have not been unmindful of the difficulties, the economic difficulties, which Japan has to encounter in the problems which she has to solve.

MR. GALLACHER: What problems?

MR. EDEN: Economic problems, problems of population, of trade and the rest. If it is permissible for His Majesty's Government to suggest what should be the remedy for a situation which has presented so many difficulties in recent years we would say that it is to be sought only in a change of method, in a real attempt at understanding between the two countries which would ensure a period of tranquillity affording opportunity for the development of peaceful trade and commerce. As long as the uncertain situation in North China is allowed to continue, and as long as a succession of incidents are patched up by local settlements of rather doubtful scope and validity, the situation will remain charged with danger. Is it too much to hope that both Governments will yet make a determined effort to endeavour to find a comprehensive settlement of their differences? A few weeks ago, as I told the House, we welcomed the approach made to us recently by the Japanese Government, and hope it may yet be possible to improve still further our relations with that Government, and to find a solution for the various difficulties which affect our relations. We had hoped that a further improvement of the relations between ourselves and Japan would have enabled us to contribute to a general easing of the situation in the Far East, which in our firm conviction would be to the benefit of all concerned. There is much more prosperity to be gained out of peaceful developments in the Far East than can ever be attained by other methods, and that is

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why we are watching present developments with a very real anxiety, and with a fervent wish that these unhappy incidents may be settled, so that the way may be open to a better and more stable state of things.

I come nearer home to deal with another country which has been so largely in our minds this last year. I do not propose to deal at any length with the Spanish situation today, but I want to make a brief reference to the further stages of the negotiations on the Non-Intervention Committee. A week ago the nations were at a deadlock. They were without a plan and without an agreed basis upon which to work. Now that basis exists, and it has been accepted by all. If I may translate that into Parliamentary terms, I would say that our proposals have had their Second Reading, and that they enter upon the Committee stage tomorrow. Perhaps, therefore, the moment is not inappropriate to say a word or two about the prospects of their achieving the purpose for which they were designed, to circumscribe the Spanish conflict and to leave Spaniards to decide their own destiny. Our proposals constitute a carefully balanced whole. This fact is at once an encouragement and a warning. It means that in the elements of our proposals each nation finds something that it likes while no nation finds everything that it likes. That balance must not be upset. Every member of the Non-Intervention Committee must recall that the contribution which he is most anxious to withhold is precisely that which another member of the committee is most anxious to receive. The plan, therefore, stands or falls as a whole. Any attempt to modify it, except in points of detail, will upset its balance and destroy its usefulness.

If this plan fails, what is the alternative? None other, as

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we know, than the complete breakdown of non-intervention. The opening of frontiers, the competitive flow of unrestricted supplies of munitions and perhaps of men—what combatant in Spain will gain from such a state of affairs? There may be argument about that. On one thing there can be no argument: Europe would certainly lose from such a course and the nations would once again confront, and I fear in an intensified form, those dangers from which M. Blum's initiative saved them last autumn. Let us be blunt about it. No nation wants the Spanish Civil War to be a European war, yet if the nations will not now co-operate sincerely on a basis which they have all accepted, we shall drift perilously nearer to it. Whatever their difficulties, whatever their preoccupations, whatever their provocations, I pray that the nations who begin their work tomorrow will never forget the alternative. It should be their signpost to success.

We, the Government of this country, have throughout the last six months laid emphasis on the importance of securing a withdrawal of foreigners from Spain. We have done this for more than one reason. The teachings of history, I suggest, show that the victory of one side or the other in civil war, if brought about by foreign aid, is not final. Surely the least that Europe can seek to do for Spain is to co-operate so that the ordeal which that country is now undergoing be not repeated in our generation.

In that connection I would like to draw the attention of the Committee to a remarkable letter which appears in *The Times* this morning from a Spaniard who has himself contributed much in the past to international collaboration. There is just one brief passage from that letter which I would beg to quote:

“By a tragic coincidence this war, essentially Spanish,

has 'caught on' abroad. Lured by somewhat shallow parallelisms, men, institutions, and even Governments outside Spain have been adding fuel to the fire which is consuming our unhappy country. Spain is thus suffering vicariously the latent civil war which Europe is—so far—keeping in check. I earnestly hope that the more militant groups on both sides will realize that their activities are not merely dangerous—that they do see—but also sterile. Spain will never be either Communist or Fascist. Her foreign policy, determined by geo-political and economic laws, will never vary fundamentally—whoever wins—and foreign help, known to have been given for something more than its own sake, is sure to call forth deep resentment after the war in Spain, in all Spain. Here again, the best policy, and the one most in harmony with the interests of all the nations concerned, is to agree to bring about a speedy end of the war through reconciliation."

That is from Señor de Madariaga. I can only say that His Majesty's Government are in complete agreement with every word that I have quoted, and there is only one sentence that I would add. We ourselves would be ready at any time to collaborate in any way possible to bring an end to this tragic Spanish war, and we believe that the method proposed by this distinguished Spaniard, were it only acceptable on both sides, would in the end be of the greatest benefit to Spain itself.

It has been stated many times with truth that this country has no desire to interfere with, no intention of interfering in, the internal affairs of Spain. But our interest in the integrity of Spanish territory is very real. It has been clearly expressed. Only a few days ago I used certain words which, since they were deliberately chosen and have the

approval of my colleagues, I pray the indulgence of the Committee to repeat:

“But disinterestedness in this matter [the internal affairs of Spain] must not be taken to mean disinterestedness where British interests are concerned on the land or the sea frontiers of Spain, or the trade routes that pass her by.”

This country has every intention of defending its national interest in the Mediterranean, as elsewhere in the world. There must be no mistake about that. Yet, it is important that there should be no misconception anywhere. While we are determined to defend our own interests we have no intention of challenging those of others. That is why we made with Italy the Mediterranean Agreement of last January. We stand by that Agreement. If the Mediterranean is for us a main arterial road—and it is—yet there is plenty of room for all on such a road. If we intend to maintain our place on it—and we do—we have no intention of seeking to turn anybody else off it. Least of all do we wish to interfere with those who geographically dwell upon it. There is ample room for all. Free traffic through and out of the Mediterranean is the common interest of Great Britain and of all the Mediterranean Powers.

In the light of certain reports which have reached me there is one further categorical assurance I should like to give. This country has no intention of pursuing towards any other country a policy either of aggression or of revenge. Such a possibility has never even occurred to the British people. The word “vendetta” has no English equivalent. The foreign policy of this country will never be based upon such a motive or influenced by such a sentiment, but if any apprehensions exist upon that score they should be instantly allayed. To entertain them is truly to misconceive

the British character. We wish to live in peace and friendship with our neighbours in the Mediterranean, as elsewhere, for while we will defend our own we covet nought of theirs. The moment is perhaps opportune to add that what I have said about the Mediterranean applies equally to the Red Sea. It has always been, and it is today, a major British interest that no great Power should establish itself on the Eastern shore of the Red Sea. I need hardly add that this applies to ourselves no less than to others.

While we speak of the Red Sea I would like to make a reference to Egypt. It is now nearly a year since the signature of a treaty of friendship and alliance with Egypt. In the interval our relations have continued to grow in friendliness and to develop in confidence. The settlement of various matters which required readjustment as a result of the treaty is proceeding amicably and with due expedition. I am confident that material advantage has accrued to both countries by the establishment of their relations on a new basis consecrated by the treaty. We in this country feel sure that, in the light of the collaboration which has taken place between our two Governments in the past year, the Government of Egypt on their part share this feeling and find nothing to regret in the close and free connection established by treaty between our two countries.

I have referred to matters requiring adjustment as a result of the treaty, and I would in this context call special attention to the settlement by the Convention of Montreux of the question of the Capitulations, in respect of which we are indebted to my Right Honourable and Gallant Friend the Member for Hornsey [Captain Wallace]. I would not wish to mention the Montreux Convention, the provisions of which His Majesty's Government regard as eminently

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satisfactory for all parties, without drawing the attention of the Committee to this instance of success attending the efforts of a number of nations to collaborate in solving a long-standing difference by mutual agreement.

I would now like to venture upon slightly different ground and to say a few words to the Committee about the economic factors and their relation to the present international situation. I find it much easier to talk in general terms about the economic causes of war than to define them, or when, having defined them, to eliminate them. But we do believe, the Government believe, that the removal of the barriers which at present impede and at times stop altogether the course of international trade would be an effective step in the removal of political tension. In this belief we are supported by the representatives of the Dominion Governments who have lately been assembled in London for the Imperial Conference. The Committee will, I hope, have in mind the terms of the statement agreed to by all His Majesty's Governments at the Conference in connection with this problem.

I would like to make a further reference to some of the steps which are actually being taken at the moment. There was, as the Committee will recall, the Three Power Declaration of last September by the United Kingdom Government, the French Government, and the United States Government, which not only laid down the basis of currency co-operation, but affirmed the importance that they attached to the progressive relaxation of the present system of quotas and exchange controls with a view to their abolition. Resulting from that agreement of last September is the mission undertaken at the request of the French Government and the United Kingdom Government, by M. Van Zeeland, the

Prime Minister of Belgium, to inquire in the principal European countries as to the possibility and the practicality of progress in this direction being made.

MR. BELLENGER: Is it limited to European nations?

MR. EDEN: I will come to that point later. In the course of these inquiries which M. Van Zeeland has made himself or through the agency of a distinguished Belgian economist, M. Frère, he has recently paid a visit to the United States, at the close of which, as the Committee are aware, he paid a visit to London and reported to my Right Honourable Friend the Prime Minister and myself the state of the work which he had undertaken. There is another aspect of economic matters to which I would like to refer. The preliminary discussions now proceeding in Washington with a view to seeing whether there is a basis for negotiations for a trade agreement between the United States and the United Kingdom are, of course, welcomed by His Majesty's Government. It is the desire of both Governments that such agreement should be a practical contribution to the development of international trade and the movement for promoting world peace through economic agreements. In that connection, there is the work which has been done in recent months by the League of Nations inquiry into the question of equal commercial access to raw materials for all nations. This inquiry should also be of assistance, and its report will be available in September, I understand, providing both information and possibly suggestions, leading in the direction of freer trade and of economic appeasement. There are the ideals which inspired the Oslo countries, ideals which we welcomed. In these and other ways, perhaps not in the full glare of publicity, a good deal of work is being done to show practical support of recent endeavours to pro-

mote international trade and to remove potential causes of international friction. We shall persist in these endeavours, though our contribution must necessarily be limited by the fact that His Majesty's Government policy in regard to imports is clearly a liberal one, as is illustrated by the very large volume of our imports and the very steady increase throughout recent months.

I come now to say something of the League of Nations. In spite of the events of the last year, the League is neither dead nor moribund, as some people maintain. . . .

The field of action may be restricted by the limitation of League membership and by the absence from Geneva of many powerful States, but the League still exercises a valuable political influence; particularly the settlement only a short while ago of the dispute between France and Turkey over the Sanjak of Alexandretta was an example of this. That dispute had all the elements which might, in different conditions, have led to a grave international situation. I am confident that but for the fact that it was possible to handle it by what we may call League methods, a solution would not have been found in the time and the circumstances which prevailed. It was an important victory, we think, for League principles and methods.

If we approach the question of reform, the League Committee which is charged with this subject has a difficult task, because the moment the subject is discussed, two contending theses are revealed. On the one hand, you have those who believe that the only way to strengthen the League's authority is to make its obligations more binding and to increase the implications for taking coercive action; on the other side, you get those who urge that the League can be strengthened only by widening its membership, and that in

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order to achieve this result it is necessary to lay emphasis on the conciliatory rather than on the coercive clauses in the Covenant. In the face of this difference of view, and there are countless shades between them, it is necessary to proceed with caution. It is not difficult to devise machinery, but no paper plan, however well drafted, is of use if the will to work it is lacking.

In that connection, I would like to utter a word of warning to the Committee. Nothing, in our view, could be more inimical to the application of the principles of the Covenant or to the restoration of the League's authority than a situation in which the world is divided into two groups of Powers, one inside and one outside the League. It must be the object of members of the League to do everything in their power to check any tendency in that direction. It must constantly be made clear that there is room at Geneva for all countries, whatever their political complexion, whatever their system of government, provided that they desire to co-operate in the work of the maintenance of peace. It cannot be too strongly asserted that the League is an association of sovereign States. It is not an alliance for the furtherance of a particular political creed or the maintenance of a particular political system. The League cannot, as a whole, be anti-anything except dissension and war, or pro-anything except conciliation and peace.

In this connection I was glad to note the refusal of the British representative at a recent international trade-union conference at Warsaw to join an anti-Fascist league for peace. I am convinced that it would be a grave and perhaps irreparable error were our foreign policy ever to be conducted upon such principles. If we will not join an international

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bloc against Communism—and we will not—neither will we join an international *bloc* against Fascism. . . .

There can be only one foreign policy for this country, a willingness to co-operate with any country, whatever its form of government, that is willing to work for peace.

MR. GALLACHER: You must be against Fascism if you are to work for peace.

MR. EDEN: Everybody knows the honourable Gentleman's sentiments. They are unique. I submit that what matters to us is not the way a government governs at home but the way it conducts itself abroad. That is the only thing upon which international relations can rest.

Knowing the difficulty of co-operation between nations today, I would like to pay a tribute to the helpful and statesmanlike attitude of the German and Soviet Governments—it is nice to be able to mention them in one sentence—who, in concluding naval agreements with this country a few days ago, of their own free will subscribed to the system of qualitative limitation and the system of exchange of information set out in the London Naval Treaty. I do not wish to enter into details about this subject, which will be dealt with by the First Lord tomorrow, but I say that their readiness to co-operate in the field of naval limitation is a sure proof that, given mutual goodwill and understanding on both sides, even the most difficult problems are not impossible of solution.

Now I come to a reference which the Right Honourable Gentleman the Member for Caithness made in his speech on Thursday last. The Right Honourable Gentleman spoke, I think rightly, of the importance at the present time of no step being taken which would in any way affect the present excellent relations between ourselves and France.

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I agree. In fact, one of the facts which have enabled us to pass through the last twelve months without the major disaster of a European conflict has been the steadily growing confidence and intimacy of the relations between our two countries. Fortunately, that friendship is now nowhere misunderstood. No one can seriously hope, no one should want, to weaken or destroy that friendship. There have been periods during these post-War years, let us admit it frankly, when the French Government and ourselves have not seen eye to eye and when we have not agreed in our policies towards Europe, and more particularly towards Germany. That period is passed, never, we trust, to return. Why is it passed? Because we are convinced that the present French Government are sincerely anxious, as we ourselves are sincerely anxious, to bring about a real improvement in our relations with Germany and to seek to reach a Western agreement as a prelude to that wider settlement which must be our constant objective.

Nearly thirty years ago Sir Edward Grey, the then Foreign Secretary of this country, wrote a private letter which was published in that remarkable biography by Professor Trevelyan. Grey wrote:

“Foreign Office things are always in a mess; they are not as if one were doing constructive work or writing a book or a lecture, or reading up a subject, and they can never be put aside for a day.”

How well those words apply to the last twelve months. They have been an anxious and at times a tempestuous period in the international sphere. They have imposed a heavy strain upon all concerned with the conduct of foreign affairs in their respective countries, and not least, if I may be allowed to add, in Parliamentary countries.

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Within a few days of the Parliamentary holiday, as we survey the world, the outlook is not wholly bad. There are storm clouds, but there are patches of clear sky. On the whole, the atmosphere is less tense and lowering than it was twelve months ago. The mere fact that Europe has endured for twelve months the strains and stresses and the sudden jars and constantly recurring crises of this Spanish conflict, without the whole of Europe being involved in its consequences, surely affords a cause of modified hope. There has been a measure of international co-operation, however uncertain its working or however incomplete its success. None of the nations, some of them violently partisan to one side or the other in the Spanish conflict, in truth desired that the flames should spread.

It may be, also, that the conflict in Spain has enforced another lesson. In modern warfare a quick victory is not to be easily won. The very fact that warfare today is not fought out between small, highly trained professional armies, but involves the whole population, their lives and their homes, at once widens its scope, intensifies its horror, and prolongs its duration. It also increases the power of defence. No one today can hope to reap advantage from a long war. It would spell international ruin. And I would leave this thought with the Committee if I might. There is a further difference between the years before 1914 and today. In those years most people found it hard to believe in the possibility of a world war, and even those whose apprehensions were most acute greatly underrated its scope and its duration. Today we know more of this monster, and this should aid us to control and conjure it. No man in his senses could want to see it unleashed. Therefore, though the load of international anxieties remains heavy, though there can be

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no lasting confidence until an international organization with world membership is entrusted with the arbitration of our differences and the conciliation of our disputes, yet I stand at this Box today with a greater measure of hope than was possible a year ago that the nations of Europe will yet compose their quarrels and that peace will be preserved.

PIRACY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

In July 1937 an exchange of personal letters took place between Mr. Neville Chamberlain and Signor Mussolini with a view to removing existing misunderstandings and improving relations between the two countries.

During the late summer a number of attacks were made on merchant shipping in the Mediterranean by submarines of unknown nationality, as a result of which a number of British and other merchant ships were sunk with loss of life. After consultation between the British and French Governments it was decided to summon a conference of the Mediterranean Powers at Nyon and to attempt there to agree upon effective steps to put a stop to these piratical attacks. Mr. Eden broadcast a speech from Geneva on the Nyon Conference on 17th September.

THE Mediterranean Powers, assembled in conference at Nyon, signed this morning an agreement designed to put a stop to submarine piracy in that sea. Its provisions will come into force at once.

Let me first say a few words about the origins of this agreement. The conflict in Spain has produced a state of affairs highly dangerous to merchant shipping. For months past the Royal Navy has been taking special measures for the protection of British ships on the high seas. But more recently a new problem has arisen in the Mediterranean. Submarines of unknown nationality (and it is obviously more easy for a submarine than for a surface vessel to con-

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ceal its identity) have repeatedly and indiscriminately attacked and sunk merchant ships.

Each of the parties in Spain has disclaimed responsibility for the acts of these pirate submarines. The problem, therefore, that confronted the Conference of Mediterranean Powers was that of the masked highwayman who does not stop short of manslaughter or even murder.

You may perhaps ask why a conference was necessary. The reason is that we wished to mark clearly the horror which surely must be felt by all civilized people at the barbarous methods employed in these submarine attacks. Moreover, the size of the Mediterranean and the consequent extent of the problem made it certain that unorganized efforts would result in overlapping and confusion and might, in consequence, fail of their purpose.

Nor could we ignore the moral certainty that if this state of affairs continued new and still graver international incidents must occur. Collective deliberation leading to swift collective action was imperative. When, therefore, the French Government suggested a conference, His Majesty's Government warmly welcomed the proposal.

The small Swiss town of Nyon was chosen as being sufficiently near Geneva to suit those countries whose statesmen would be gathered there for the Assembly of the League, while a meeting place outside Geneva might seem more acceptable to such countries as were not active members of the League.

In the event, however, Germany and Italy felt unable to take part. His Majesty's Government sincerely regret their decision, but, together with the French Government, we have none the less informed them of the progress made in the hope that they may be willing to co-operate.

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I will not describe in any detail the progress of the Conference. Thanks to the goodwill shown by the representatives of the participating Powers, a draft agreement was hammered out after only two days of concentrated work.

We ruled out the convoy system as impracticable in times of peace, and took as the kernel of the arrangement the rules laid down in the London Naval Treaty of 1930, which have since been reaffirmed in the Submarine Protocol. This Protocol had been signed as recently as November of last year by all the Powers invited to the Conference.

Its rules circumscribe very closely the conditions in which submarines may lawfully operate. It was, moreover, necessary to provide the patrolling vessels with as clear a definition of their duties as possible. The recent submarine sinkings had in fact shown an utter disregard for these rules, and constituted a kind of gangster terrorism of the sea. They took no account of the sufferings and loss of life of the crews on their peaceful calling. We did not believe that these unknown submarines would or could continue their pirate attacks if these rules were enforced.

What, in fact, have we actually done? We have not authorized patrolling vessels to counter-attack a marauding submarine in all circumstances. We have not altered our attitude to the question of belligerent rights. We have not admitted the right of either party to the struggle to interfere with non-Spanish merchant ships, even if the rules of war are observed. Our own right to take any action proper to protect our own merchant shipping has not been affected. What we have done is to authorize the patrolling vessels to counter-attack, and if possible destroy, any submarine actually engaged in piracy. Moreover, the same action will be taken against any submarine that is found so close to the

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scene of an actual attack that there is no reasonable doubt of its guilt.

To make these instructions more effective, we have divided the Mediterranean into zones in which the patrolling vessels of certain of the participating Powers will operate. I will not go into technical naval details. I think you will agree that if the responsible authorities of the Royal Navy are sure that the arrangements made are the most effective possible, we need have little anxiety on this score. We believe that we have put a stop to submarine piracy in the Mediterranean. We have set up in that sea a police force. If any submarines attempt again to embark on evil courses, they will, I hope and believe, receive the punishment they deserve.

AFTER NYON

Despite the success of the Nyon Conference international anxiety about the Spanish conflict persisted. Meanwhile developments in the Far Eastern situation continued to cause misgiving, and arrangements were being made for the summoning of a Conference of the signatories of the Nine-Power Treaty. On his return from Nyon these events formed the main theme of Mr. Eden's speech made at Llandudno on 15th October 1937.

IN two parts of the world undeclared wars are raging and it is on Spain and the Far East in particular that our attention today is specially fixed.

I would speak first of the Spanish conflict.

The events of the past year—so cruel in the sufferings they have imposed on the Spanish people—have not caused us to modify the judgement that intervention is a mistake on the part of those who intervene. For more than a year the conflict has continued and yet there is still no military decision. During that time some countries have actively intervened, despite their engagements to the contrary, yet even now if there were to be a military victory on the part of one side or the other, would that be the end? All history goes to show that decisions in civil strife brought about as the outcome of foreign intervention are not enduring. Each country must and will settle its own affairs and attempts to deflect that process by foreign intervention will not finally be successful. Let me remind you that the Duke of Wellington, who had surely some experience of Spanish conflicts, wrote more than a hundred years ago: “There is no country

in Europe in the affairs of which foreigners can interfere with so little advantage as Spain."

Looking back, therefore, over the past year I am convinced that the policy of non-intervention, pursued by His Majesty's Government and endorsed by the British people as a whole, was the right one. We have observed that policy in the spirit and in the letter and I for one am thankful that no British aircraft have been operating in Spain and that no British aeroplane has crashed on Spanish lines.

But in saying this I want to make a clear distinction between non-intervention and indifference. We are not indifferent to the maintenance of the territorial integrity of Spain. We are not indifferent to the foreign policy of any future Spanish government. We are not indifferent to the complications which may arise in the Mediterranean as the result of the intervention of others in Spain. We are not indifferent to vital British interests in the Mediterranean. A clear distinction must be made between non-intervention in what is purely a Spanish affair and non-intervention where British interests are at stake.

Piracy in the Mediterranean was an example of the latter. The freedom of commerce in the Mediterranean had become menaced, merchant ships were being attacked and even sunk without notice when engaged upon their lawful occasions. Such conditions in the Mediterranean were intolerable and so the Nyon Conference was held and its decisions were taken, and rapidly taken. The measures there agreed upon have proved effective. Piracy upon the high seas has ceased. We shall continue to be watchful to see that those interests of ours in the Mediterranean and in the maintenance of our line of communications with the Near East and India are not endangered.

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In the last ten days the French Government and ourselves made an endeavour to engage in conversations with the Italian Government with a view to attempting to come to some effective arrangement about Spain which would allow of the continuation of the non-intervention policy. The Italian Government felt unable to accede to the proposal and suggested instead, amongst other considerations, that this problem should be re-examined by the Non-Intervention Committee. I will not conceal from you that we regret this reply because past experience has shown that it is difficult to make progress with these questions in the Non-Intervention Committee, and because we are conscious that, unless progress can now be made and made rapidly, the situation must, in the words which the Prime Minister used at Scarborough, cause us increasing anxiety. None the less, the French Government and ourselves did not wish a breakdown to come, if come it must, upon an issue which might be represented as one of procedure, and so we have agreed to the reference to the Committee which is to meet tomorrow. This, of course, does not mean that we are prepared to acquiesce in dilatory tactics. The next few days will show whether or not the nations are prepared to make a sincere effort to deal with the Spanish problem in a spirit of real international collaboration. That is certainly our own disposition. If it is generally shown, then the most anxious problem of the immediate present will be on a fair way to solution. If, however, the Committee is now unable to make progress, as it was unable to make progress last July, then I fear that it is useless to conceal from ourselves the gravity of the situation that will confront us.

A feature of the present situation is proclaimed intervention, the glorification of breaches of agreement. In such

conditions no one can complain if the patience of those who have striven to keep their responsibilities towards Europe constantly before them is well-nigh exhausted. I for one should certainly not be prepared to utter criticism of any nation which, if such conditions continue, felt compelled to resume its freedom of action.

I shall now make some reference to the situation in the Far East.

President Roosevelt was many times right when he drew attention in his recent speech at Chicago to the "present reign of terror and international lawlessness which has now reached," he said, "the stage where the very foundations of civilisation are seriously threatened." You will all have read the terms in which the Prime Minister referred to this speech of Mr. Roosevelt's when he addressed the Conservative Conference last Friday. Mr. Chamberlain called it a "clarion call, as welcome as it was timely." It was indeed a clarion call. A call to all nations to return to a belief in the pledged word and the sanctity of treaties. In these days of international violence and lawlessness, it is well for us that the President of the most powerful republic in the world should remind us in these forceful words that it is not so long since we all pledged ourselves to refrain from resort to force as an instrument of international policy.

You will not expect me tonight to enter into details of the Nine-Power Meeting which we hope will now be held in a few days' time. We have our mandate from the League of Nations, a mandate which I have little doubt will be acceptable to the Conference.

It is earnestly to be hoped that all those whose co-operation is necessary will be present at this meeting. For our own part you may be sure of this, we will co-operate heartily

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with those who go there to work in the spirit of President Roosevelt's declaration. That is our spirit also.

One satisfactory feature which has emerged prominently during the past year has been the strengthening of our relations with France. Here there is a very welcome change between the situation now and that which prevailed in 1935. There is not only a community of interests but a common outlook. These two great democracies in Europe have more and more realized that they are the custodians of a great tradition which they have inherited and that that tradition is worth preserving. The United States, in spite of her distance from the European scene, is equally conscious of this aspect of the present situation in the world.

We have said more than once that we in this country have no concern with the forms of governments of foreign States. That is perfectly true and remains true so long as it is the general practice, that is so long as foreign States as a whole observe this practice, but such toleration must be general, and, if we have no intention to seek to make all States in Europe democracies, so others should not seek to make all States in Europe either Fascist or Communist. Only on this basis can there be, as there should be, cordial co-operation between nations, whatever their forms of government.

We ourselves remain a free democracy and I for one would find it impossible to reconcile my conception of our own people with any other form of government. It is so much a part of our life that we do not proclaim our allegiance to it either by mass parades or by clothing. But if we are to maintain it in the face of criticism and the keen competition of other systems, we must prove that we are ready to make the same sacrifices for it as the exponents of

other political faiths. That is one part and a very important part of the price we must pay for peace.

That is why, holding the office that I do, I cordially welcome the progress that is being made in our own rearmament and still more the Prime Minister's indication that that progress was to be further accelerated. We regret the necessity for expenditure in such a cause. It is still my personal conviction that nations would have saved themselves much international strain and some loss in their standard of life had they been able to agree to limit their armaments expenditure. Some day such a limitation must be reached if the world is to be finally at peace. But in the meanwhile we have a duty to our own people. We have to deal with conditions not as we want them to be, but as they are. And in a rearming world such as exists today nothing can be more futile than clamant cries for bellicose policies coupled with votes against armaments. For this reason I rejoice at the pronouncements recently made by prominent trade-union leaders in this country and at the vote recently given at the Socialist Party Conference. I am confident that, though very belated, this is a contribution to peace.

If there is anything else a Foreign Secretary lacks, he does not lack advice. Unhappily this is somewhat contradictory. In the main, however, it falls into two categories. On the one hand I am urged to make the League work and to put the whole weight of His Majesty's Government behind the League, to the exclusion of all else. On the other hand, I am advised that we should have done with the League and its unrealities and come to terms with the non-Member States. It is my own conviction that the present international situation does not lend itself to this over-

simplication. I wish it did. Our foreign policy has to take account of other factors which are here ignored.

First the League. I am second to none in my desire to see the League fulfil the purposes for which it was intended, and it would be a sad day for the world if all these hopes were finally banished. I do not myself believe that they will be. But it is useless to blind oneself to facts and, if the League can still accomplish much today in spite of the disappointment of recent years, it is not the organization in itself, apart from the Members, which achieves this. I often see it written, "Geneva says this or that," as if Geneva were itself an oracle which could itself proclaim a holy war in which all the faithful would rush to arms. The Members of the League are not heedless fanatics. On the contrary, they have and must have a sense of responsibility and they have to count very seriously the cost of any action they may take. They are fully conscious of the position as it is, of the vacant seats at the Council table.

Let me turn to those who urge that we should throw over the League and come to terms with the States who are not Members. I am never quite sure what this advice means when it comes down to hard facts. I am as anxious as anybody to remove disagreements with Germany and Italy or any other country, but we must make sure that, in trying to improve the situation in one direction, it does not deteriorate in another. In such an event our last state might be no better or even worse than the former. I have often said on public platforms in this country that His Majesty's Government have no intention of making exclusive friendships with other countries and that they cannot lend themselves to a policy which in order to include some must ex-

clude others. There is no desire whatever on the part of the Government to isolate any country or to ring any country round with a wall of enemies. There is equally no desire to pursue a policy of revenge against any country. Surely no action taken by His Majesty's Government could justify such wild and unwarranted assumptions. On the contrary, we have made—and our records are there to demonstrate it—every effort and shall continue making them to prevent any country being isolated, to settle any outstanding disagreement in the way best calculated to promote a wider agreement.

No one unhappily can doubt, no one should seek to minimize the anxieties of the present international situation. Many of us were convinced that loss of authority by the League must usher in a period of greater uncertainty. This is proving true. We are in a period of storm and challenge, when the hope is openly avowed that the variety of international anxieties will prevent effective resistance to unlawful courses in any one sphere. This is dangerous doctrine. No nation will profit by such practices in the end. If these be persisted in, inevitably there will be a nemesis.

But meanwhile we cannot but be conscious of the daily anxieties that beset us. Obligations are ignored, engagements cynically torn up, confidence has been shaken, methods of making war without declaring war are being adopted, while all the time each nation declares that its one desire is for peace. I am sure that in all this confusion and in the midst of the horrors that we see being enacted in Europe and in the Far East we must still persevere as strongly and as effectively as we can. We must not hide our eyes to what is unpleasant, thereby deluding our own people, but with a full

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grasp of reality we must concentrate on what can be done, not pretending to achieve the impossible nor provoking the very consequences we wish most to avoid. Diplomacy alone cannot achieve this. Party polemics merely obscure the truths. Through national unity we can and will succeed.

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The Government's foreign policy was severely criticized in the House of Commons on 1st November 1937. The chief critics were Mr. Attlee, Mr. Noel-Baker, Mr. Lloyd George, and Mr. Herbert Morrison, and the main objects of their attacks were the Nyon Agreement, the Sino-Japanese Conflict in 1931, the raising of Sanctions against Italy, and the Government's handling of the Spanish problem.

Before the Debate Mr. Duncan Sandys asked a question regarding Germany's colonial claims, which was answered by Mr. Eden in the course of the following speech.

THE honourable Member for Bishop Auckland [Mr. Dalton] began his speech with a number of references to the domestic situation. I do not conceal from the House that it would be welcome to me to speak upon that subject for a while, just as welcome as it seems to be to many honourable Members to speak on foreign affairs; but as the honourable Gentleman truly said, the Government have many criticisms to answer arising out of this debate. I will at the outset concede him one point. He asked me whether the Government are aware of the seriousness of the international situation. Of course we are. That is why I regretted one or two of the sentences spoken by the honourable Gentleman, who is usually so prudent, as befits him with his Foreign Office experience, in what he says to the House. It is because we realize how serious the situation is that I am not going to waste much of the time of the House this after-

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noon in debating once again what happened in 1931, 1932, 1933, and so forth. It is above all with the present situation and criticisms of it that I wish to deal.

I will say only one thing, in passing, of the last few years. The honourable Gentleman said that the main burden of responsibility lies with His Majesty's Government. As far as I know, nobody pretends that this Government has ever failed to observe itself the international obligations to which it has set its name. We have referred every dispute in which we have ever been concerned to arbitration, as we were bound to do. Certainly, all that could be done by precept and example has been done, and if there is criticism, it is against our ability, not alone, but in conjunction with and sharing the responsibility with others, to enforce the rôle of policeman. We have observed our own obligations, but we have not been able to compel everybody else to observe theirs.

I want, in speaking this afternoon, to concentrate mainly upon four speeches that were in criticism of the Government—the speeches of the Right Honourable Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition, the honourable Member for Derby [Mr. Noel-Baker], the Right Honourable Gentleman the Member for Carnarvon Boroughs [Mr. Lloyd George], and the Right Honourable Gentleman the Member for South Hackney [Mr. H. Morrison]. The critics of the foreign policy of the Government possess one great advantage in that they may indulge in almost unlimited indiscretion—and if I may say so with respect, they have not been shy in that connection—in their criticism, whereas the Foreign Secretary of the day is inevitably limited by considerations of even more importance than making a good case for the Government in this House. Many a point has to be reluctantly

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set aside because its use might constitute an abuse in a more important sphere; but there are occasions when restraint may surely be to some extent relaxed, and I want this afternoon, as nearly as I feel I can, to approach that condition which Lord Baldwin once described as being "appallingly frank."

I would like to begin with a reference, not to any of the speeches to which I want to reply, but to a question that was put to me a little earlier this afternoon by my honourable Friend the Member for Norwood [Mr. Sandys]. I asked him to be good enough to allow me to answer that question during the debate, which I thought would be a more appropriate moment. His question had to do with certain aspects of the Colonial problem. The House will no doubt have observed that during recent days a country that had itself, as the outcome of the Great War, gained very considerable accessions of territory in Europe and also received certain territorial concessions in Africa from countries which were her Allies in the Great War, has now championed the claim of Germany to African possessions. I do not desire to add anything at this moment about this claim so far as it concerns Germany and ourselves. But I must now declare plainly that we do not admit the right of any Government to call upon us for a contribution when there is no evidence to show that that Government are prepared to make any contribution on their own account.

Now I come to some of the criticisms which have been uttered. The Right Honourable Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition in his references to the Nyon Agreement contrasted the promptitude with which, he said, we had acted there, with the delays of the Non-Intervention Committee, arguing that we were active for Imperialist interests,

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but less active in what concerns international law. I do not accept the Right Honourable Gentleman's censure. The Right Honourable Gentleman drew this distinction and I wish to point out to the House that it has no existence whatever in fact. It is difficult to imagine an arrangement which is less exclusively concerned with our own interests. The Agreement was reached among all the Powers there, to protect the freedom of commerce in the Mediterranean. It is true that action falls almost exclusively on our Navy and the French Navy, but we are not acting and have not been acting, all these weeks, on our own behalf alone. The ships of all nations were being sunk—Danish, Dutch, even Russian—and all those nations are now having their commerce protected as well as our own. We reported what we had done to the Council of the League, who certainly did not feel that we had been either selfish or Imperialist and, indeed, expressed their approval of what we had done.

As I have said, I do not wish to go at length over the past, but there are two references which I wish to make in answer to what fell from the honourable Gentleman who has just sat down. The Right Honourable Gentleman the Member for Carnarvon Boroughs when he was speaking about the Manchurian affair and the events of 1931, said there had been a complete failure to take action in connection with that dispute. He also said that there had been complete agreement among the Members of the League. I would ask him with respect, "Agreement to take what action?" It is perfectly true, of course, that Members of the League were agreed upon the resolution which was passed and which resulted in the withdrawal of Japan from the League, but if he means by "agreement," agreement upon action to impose economic sanctions, then, with respect, I

say that he is wrong. I was not there, but I have taken the trouble to have the records searched, and as far as I can discover there was no proposal made at the League, at any time during that dispute, to put economic sanctions upon Japan. So, I ask the Right Honourable Gentleman what he means when he says that there was complete agreement among Members of the League to take action, and gives the impression that it was we alone who were not prepared to take it.

Then, on another matter, the honourable Gentleman who has just sat down gave with some skill an impression which is often given on the public platform. I admit at once, and the world knows it, that the sanctions imposed in the Abyssinian dispute failed of their effect, but the honourable Gentleman gave the impression that the League was most anxious to impose all sorts of further and more serious sanctions and that it was we who held back. That must be known to the House to be an utterly false impression. After all, there were three great Powers in the League at that time. Is the honourable Gentleman going to suggest that it was the France of that day that was so anxious to impose more sanctions? He knows just as well as I do what were the views of the French Government of that time. If the criticism is, and I admit the force of it, that we took off sanctions, in the view of honourable Gentlemen opposite, too soon, then I would remind him of the suggestion which he made himself in that debate: "Do not take them off now, but go on as you are until September." Surely it is clear to anybody that the continuation of these sanctions from July to September would have made no difference whatever to the result, once the military victory had been gained. If the honourable Gentleman does not agree with my version, let him look

up the speech of M. Litvinoff. In an extremely frank speech at the Assembly he told us that there were those who urged the League to put on more sanctions. Then he worked out details to show that even of the sanctions that had been voted a quarter of them had not been applied at all by the nations of the League—that a quarter of the nations had not applied the sanctions which were imposed.

I do not want to elaborate these past events, but I feel that if the House is to arrive at a fair estimate, it should take account, not only of the natural desire to criticize the Government, but of the realities of the international situation. As I listened to the honourable Member for Derby I must say that I thought he must have pride of place in unreality. I deal first with his comments about the Spanish dispute and the League. He complained—and knowing his sincere belief in the League, I understand the sentiment which forces his complaint—that the League did not handle the Spanish dispute. He knows, of course, that on two occasions the League itself by unanimous resolution blessed the work of the Non-Intervention Committee. I know the honourable Gentleman thinks that that action was solely due to my Machiavellian influence. He has been good enough to say so in his speeches in the country. He seems to blame me; he seems to think that the League would have loved to seize this prickly and difficult problem, but that I would not let them do what they wanted to do.

Let me assure him that the League never showed any enthusiasm to handle the Spanish problem, for the very simple reason that the League knew how sharp were the divergences of views within that organization about Spain. Twice they approved the reference of the matter to the Non-Intervention Committee. The third time that it had to deal

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with the question was in the Assembly this year, but this time the blame cannot rest on my shoulders because on this occasion His Majesty's Government, fortunately, was represented by the Secretary of State for Scotland, and the French Government were represented by M. Blum. I think the Committee wrestled for days, and I am not sure that they did not also wrestle by night, trying to secure agreement on a resolution which they could put before the whole Assembly. At length they thought they had got it. They brought it before the Assembly and, as the House know, two voted against it. What is more important is that fourteen abstained. I make no secret of the fact that no League resolution could have stronger support or stronger patronage than the fact that England and France together were in favour and this resolution asked for no action whatever. Even so, there were fourteen abstentions, and the House can see for itself what the position would have been if an attempt had been made to induce the League to do what the honourable Gentleman wants and to impose sanctions in the Spanish dispute.

Whatever the merits or otherwise of trying to impose sanctions in the Spanish dispute, there was never the remotest chance of the League doing anything of the kind, and, frankly, I do not think it right to come to this House even to discuss the possibility of these things, when we know how utterly unreal it all is. The truth is, and it must be faced, that the whole world does not look upon the Spanish dispute exactly in the same way as honourable Gentlemen opposite. There are, discreditable though honourable Gentlemen opposite no doubt think it, a great many nations, Members of the League, who want General Franco to win.

MR. THURTLÉ: The City of London does.

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MR. EDEN: There are those who believe that Communist propaganda is more responsible for the state of Spain than any other organism, and honourable Members will find that that belief is particularly strong among South American States who are related in blood to the Spanish people. I am not saying that that is my view or that it is not my view. That is immaterial for the sake of my argument. The point which the House has to take into account is that on this issue the League and the world and public opinion in the great democracies are very sharply divided, and if we do not face that fact, it is, frankly, useless to attempt to discuss this Spanish problem at all.

The honourable Gentleman's other complaint was that League action had not been taken in China, but that action had been taken—again, as it happens, not on our initiative—to refer this Far Eastern dispute to the signatories of the Nine-Power Treaty. The honourable Gentleman refuses to appreciate the difference between the position which the United States Government occupy at Geneva and the position which they will occupy at Brussels, but surely that difference is vital. At Geneva the United States representative was only an observer, taking no part in the proceedings and having no responsibility for the decision. We all know that any action, whatever the character of that action, that can be taken in this Far Eastern dispute does essentially depend upon the co-operation of the United States, and I say without hesitation, unlike the honourable Gentleman, that in order to get the full co-operation on an equal basis of the United States Government in an international conference, I would travel, not only from Geneva to Brussels, but from Melbourne to Alaska, more particularly in the present state of the international situation.

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I am sorry that the honourable Gentleman made deprecatory references to the man who was until recently Prime Minister of Belgium, M. Van Zeeland.

MR. NOEL-BAKER: I had not the slightest intention of doing so.

MR. EDEN: I am very glad to have this cleared up. He referred to M. Van Zeeland as the cat's-paw of His Majesty's Government. Did he not mean that?

MR. NOEL-BAKER: I said that the British Government had used him as an agent; that it was obviously very difficult for M. Van Zeeland to refuse, and that I regretted very greatly that they had so used him.

MR. EDEN: I hope the honourable Gentleman will carry that explanation further, because I want to do justice to a man who is now in a very difficult position. I would remind the honourable Gentleman that M. Van Zeeland has been subject to attacks by Fascist organizations in his own country and I am quite honestly surprised that the honourable Gentleman should wish to include M. Van Zeeland in his indictment of His Majesty's Government. He said that M. Van Zeeland was our cat's-paw during what he called the Hoare-Laval proposals. M. Van Zeeland had nothing whatever to do with those proposals. Then, the honourable Gentleman said, or implied, that as a result of pressure from us the Conference was being held at Brussels. It is not always easy to lift the veil of diplomatic secrecy and confidence, but as this is a small matter, though perhaps rather important to one person, I feel I ought to make it clear that the initiative for the holding of the Conference in Brussels never came from us at all, but from the United States Government itself. I ask the House to believe that I am not trying to score a debating point.

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MR. NOEL-BAKER: May I ask whether that request came after the decision had been made at Geneva to hold the Conference outside Geneva?

MR. EDEN: Naturally, nobody could suggest the meeting place of the Conference until it had been arranged that the Conference should be held.

MR. NOEL-BAKER: Is it not a fact that the proposal had been made in Geneva and that Mr. Cordell Hull had made it plain that he would rather come to Geneva than go outside?

MR. EDEN: No, the honourable Gentleman is quite unjustified in his statement. The point that I am making and that he is trying to sidetrack is that, while it was agreed that the Nine-Power Conference should be held, it was the United States Government, and not us, that suggested Brussels as the meeting place. Therefore, this is the point, that the charge that M. Van Zeeland was our cat's-paw is wholly unjustified, and I say that deliberately, because during the Rhineland incident of the spring of last year, to which honourable Members opposite in their own manifesto have drawn attention as being one of the most critical periods through which we have passed—and it was—during that time the then Belgian Prime Minister played a very considerable part in ensuring that the consequences of that incident were not more serious for Europe than they have been. I apologize for that digression, but I wished to make it.

Now may I come to the criticisms of the Right Honourable Member for Carnarvon Boroughs? He drew, with all that brilliant eloquence that seems to grow stronger rather than dimmer with the passage of years, a highly coloured picture of the international situation and of the Spanish situation in particular, but, like many accomplished light-

ning artists, the Right Honourable Gentleman left out all those elements in the composition of his picture which he found most inconvenient. Perhaps I ought not to endeavour to embark on an artistic metaphor in the presence of my Right Honourable Friend the Member for Epping [Mr. Churchill], so I will change it to a metaphor more in tone with the speech which the Right Honourable Gentleman delivered—a bellicose metaphor. Some of us remember an experience which we had during the war years from a certain form of trench mortar. That trench mortar used to arrive in our trenches and used to hurl towards the enemy a very powerful explosive, and, having done so, used to be withdrawn into other areas, leaving it to those unfortunates who were in the front-line trench to bear the consequences of the indignant wrath of the enemy. We used to call those trench mortars, perhaps not very respectfully, “circuses,” and I confess they were not at all popular with us in the line at that time. I think the Right Honourable Gentleman’s speech, in its action on the international situation, was perhaps not unlike the activities of that trench mortar.

The Right Honourable Gentleman’s indictment was not really an indictment against non-intervention as such; it was an indictment based on charges that non-intervention had worked most unfairly towards the Spanish Government. That is the case on which I want to concentrate and to deal with the House with more frankness than has been possible hitherto, though not even now with as much frankness as I should wish. The Right Honourable Gentleman did not, if I may say so, tell the whole story. There was one point with which I agreed entirely, and that was when he said it was easy to exaggerate the importance of the foreign nationals in Spain. It is, but it is not easy to exaggerate their political

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importance—not at all—because until each one is withdrawn, there will not be a return of confidence to the Mediterranean. But it is easy to exaggerate their military importance, because each side has now hundreds of thousands of men under arms, and the foreign element in that sense is not so important. But if they are to be proclaimed, if, for instance, the honourable Member for Derby is to advertise the Italian victory at Santander, equally I think we must proclaim, if only in justice to very brave men, the fact that the International Brigade saved Madrid a year ago.

The Right Honourable Gentleman quite rightly concentrated, not on the question of men, but on the question of material. He said, and I agree, that it was the most important element to be considered. I confess I was surprised that one who was Prime Minister of this country in the Great War should have left out of all his calculations a most important element—the sea. The Right Honourable Gentleman said the Spanish Government had only one frontier, their frontier with France. That is not true. They have another, a vitally important frontier, the sea, and everybody who has watched the course of this war closely knows the very important factor which the freedom of access to Spanish ports in the East has been to the Spanish Government. The Right Honourable Gentleman said that submarines were sinking ships. So they were, for a few short weeks, but that has now all ceased.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE: One was sunk yesterday.

MR. EDEN: By an aeroplane, not by a submarine. One of the results of the Nyon Agreement, though not its aim, has been to facilitate the arrival of very large quantities of material to Spanish Government ports, and, of course, there have been, the House must know perfectly well, enormous

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quantities of material arriving in Spanish Government ports throughout the year. There is no need for me to dive into Secret Service sources. I have only to look at the official figures of the Soviet Government themselves, which they have published. This is the *Daily Telegraph* report, published on Saturday, but I must say at once that it confirms the general trend of the official figures which we have got. This gives the figures for nine months, but they are proportionately the same as our figures, which are for seven months.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE: What is the date?

MR. EDEN: This is from Moscow last Friday, and these figures, official Soviet Government figures, show that Spain is now Soviet Russia's third best customer and that she took from Russia in the last nine months 440,000 tons of goods, valued at £3,500,000. The trade was hardly complementary, because at the same time Spain only exported 44,000 tons of goods. One interesting thing which these figures show is that from January to September this year Russia shipped to Spain nearly ten times as much in weight and four and a half times as much in value as in the corresponding period for 1936. [Interruption.] I am not saying it is wrong; I am only asking honourable Members to note the fact. Some of these increases are very interesting. For instance, there is a very large figure for tractors, there is a very large figure for fertilizers, and so on, and there are large figures, of course, as one would expect, for oil, oil products, and so forth. I go on to a Russian Army publication, with which honourable Members opposite, I expect, or some of them, will be familiar, called the *Red Star*. That refers to the crushing superiority of the Republican Air Force in Spain and it claims that German and Italian machines are entirely outclassed

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by the single-seater fighters and fast bombers of the Government forces. Of course, it does not say where they came from.

MR. THURTLÉ: Could the Right Honourable Gentleman give the date of that?

MR. EDEN: Friday last. Then it goes on to claim that since 1st August the Nationalists have lost in aerial combat fifty planes against a Government loss of twenty-five. I cannot vouch for the figures; I am merely giving them to the House. It says, in addition to this, that "110 Nationalist machines have, it is claimed, been destroyed in raids on aerodromes, as against a loss of only 25 Government planes in similar circumstances." The point that I want to make is, as the House knows perfectly well, that on the Government side there are also large arrivals of war materials and that on the Government side Russian tanks and Russian aeroplanes have played a most important part in the war. When the Right Honourable Gentleman was taking the example of those places in the North, Bilbao and so forth, he must know that those were areas to which these Russian tanks and Russian aeroplanes could not effectively be got. It was not a question of the Spanish Government not having materials, but that they could not get them to the places where they wished to use them, and that is the chief contention that I want to make—the importance of the command of the sea.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE: My case was not that no material had been received, either from Russia or possibly from France, and, I believe, Mexico, but that this agreement had operated in such a way that there was an overwhelming superiority in the quantities which came from Germany and Italy in comparison with what came to the Valencia Government. After all, from what I know of munitions, even if all

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that £3,500,000 had been spent on them, it would not have amounted to much.

MR. EDEN: I am very reluctant to weight the scales. I would like to give as much information as I can. I wish to be as fair as I can, and I think it fair to say this, that I could not stand at this Box and tell the House that during the summer months of this year there had been more material reaching the insurgent forces than there had been reaching the Government forces. I could not say that. It certainly has been very large, but that is not still, if I may say so, the point that I want to make. The point that I want to make is the connection of the position at sea with the fact that the Government of Spain got, not only war material, but anything at all. Does anybody dispute this, that had there not been foreign intervention in this war, one of two things would have happened—either it would have been over long since, or, alternatively, belligerent rights would have been granted? That would certainly have been the normal course to pursue in a dispute of this kind. I have only to point out that our plan, which came before the Non-Intervention Committee in the summer, allowed for the granting of belligerent rights in certain conditions and that every nation in Europe, except Russia, assented.

If we are agreed upon that, I will explain the deduction that I make from it. Can anyone doubt this? Supposing it is admitted that normally belligerent rights would have been granted, the granting of such rights in the present conditions would have been immensely beneficial to the Power which is strongest at sea, which, of course, at present are the insurgent forces. What happened was that that non-intervention sought to create a new form of neutrality. Say, if you will, that it has succeeded or failed, but a result of that new

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form of neutrality has been that belligerent rights have not been granted, and a result of that has been to deprive the Power that is strongest at sea—surely this country, of all others, should understand the importance of that—of the use of its superiority. I say that at the moment the insurgent forces are paying a very heavy price at sea for the assistance they may be receiving from foreign nationals on land. There are many good judges who have watched this war who cannot understand why some time before the insurgent forces have not made a bargain of letting go the foreigners on their soil and using the immense power which would be put in their hands by even a limited form of belligerent rights.

DUCHESS OF ATHOLL: The Right Honourable Gentleman referred to the insurgent forces as being now the strongest at sea. May I ask him whether, if what he calls a normal form of neutrality had been adopted at the beginning, it would have inured to the advantage of the insurgents? Were they then stronger at sea?

MR. EDEN: For the first few weeks the Government were stronger at sea, but on the north coast of Spain the ships of General Franco are stronger now. I do not wish to labour this point. I have to deal with an aspect of the question quite different from that which concerns honourable Gentlemen opposite. I have to deal with the two chief complaints of the insurgent authorities. What are they? First, what happened at Bilbao, where British ships—and only British ships, let it be admitted—virtually forced their way into the harbour, brought help to the garrison, and without doubt extended the duration of the conflict. We were the only people who did it. Secondly, I have to deal with the complaint about belligerent rights. There is an answer to both. The answer is, “Because you have enjoyed non-inter-

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vention you cannot enjoy the privileges which would otherwise have been yours.”

I put these points because I want the House to appreciate that in balancing the situation the Right Honourable Gentleman—unwittingly, I am sure—did not give what I believe to be a fair weighing of the pros and cons in this matter. It is by no means so easy to demonstrate that the weight of a policy of non-intervention has been on one side. I venture to forecast that when full details are given of what has arrived in Spain on both sides in the way of munitions and so forth, honourable Members on the other side of the House will have some surprises. Before I conclude that part of the subject I would like to refer to one other criticism made by the Right Honourable Gentleman. Honourable Gentlemen opposite always speak—I understand it is their sentiment and their conviction—as though in Spain itself the nation were nine-tenths pro-Government and perhaps one-tenth pro-Franco, and that foreign intervention has made all the difference. That is not so. I will give one example. The other day the Communist Party in France made some complaint about the transfer of refugees back to Spain. There was some complaint about the way in which these refugees had been handled and the *Populaire*, the Socialist paper of France, in its answer set out the figures. It said that all these refugees were given the option to go back to whatever part of Spain they liked and the result was fifty-fifty; 22,000 went to Franco and 22,000 to the Government side. If you take an average of the population of Spain you would find, I believe, that average division of numbers.

MR. THURTLÉ: Is the Right Honourable Gentleman aware that the Prime Minister, Dr. Negrin, told me that there are over 4,000,000 Spanish people out of the population of

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26,000,000 who have come over voluntarily from the country governed by Franco to Government territory because they prefer to be under that régime? He said, further, that the fact that 4,000,000 had come over like that indicated that there were many more millions who would come over if they could.

MR. EDEN: Of course, I accept the honourable Gentleman's statement that the Spanish Prime Minister said that to him.

MR. THURTLÉ: Is the Right Honourable Gentleman contesting it?

MR. EDEN: Of course I am not contesting the good faith of what he said, but even the honourable Member must realize that he is something of a partisan in this matter. The only point I wish to make is that the main object of this non-intervention policy—and here, with respect, I join issue with the Right Honourable Gentleman—has not been to help one side or another in Spain. We may have our own sentiments as to what we want to happen in this matter, but the main object has been to neutralize and localize this war and to prevent it spreading to Europe as a whole. I venture to say that that is not an unimportant contribution to put into the scales at a time like this. The Right Honourable Gentleman swept it aside and said that there was not going to be a war anywhere. It is easy to say that from the Opposition. It is not so easy to act upon that assumption as the Government of the country. Recently a very similar charge was made against the French Government at the Bournemouth of the French Socialist Party. I think that the Bournemouth was Marseilles. M. Blum dealt with it very effectively, and I should like to quote a word of what he said in answer

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to charges very similar to those with which a more suspect individual like myself has to deal:

“Call non-intervention a lie, a fiction if you like, but the fact remains that it has helped to stop a general war. I am told I have only increased the dangers of war in the future. But the fact is that time has not been working against us, and if today there are grave dangers, we are in a different position from that of last year, and that thanks to this so-called fiction. France is now united, agreement with Great Britain is complete”—I am surprised that the Right Honourable Gentleman never once referred to France—“the international situation is changed, international opinion has changed. As regards the increased danger of war in future, I will not accept this line of argument; the party will never accept it. It is the sort of argument used to justify a preventive war.”

As I listened to the Right Honourable Gentleman I felt that in his speech he did not finish what he had to say, that the logical conclusion of his speech was not the mere opening of a frontier, which I believe might well make no material difference to the result of the war, but either active intervention by ourselves or else a preventive war.

I want to come to a point often debated about the Spanish situation. There are those who are convinced that, supposing the insurgent forces are victorious, the result will be a Spain in active alliance with a foreign policy directed against this country. I do not accept that. We are just as alive to the dangers as honourable Members opposite; but that there are strong forces working in another direction, forces of trade and commerce, forces of geography. This country is still, and will continue to be, I trust, the greatest naval power in Europe. That is not without its effect when it is known that

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we have no intention, no kind of after-thought, either direct or indirect, about the territorial integrity and the political independence of Spain. Spaniards know that very well. They know very well, too, that no British war material has killed any Spaniard on either side. These factors will, I believe, be important in the future. I am not going to accept the argument that when this conflict is over and supposing there be an insurgent victory, it is inevitable that such a government will be hostile to this country. We have every desire to live on friendly terms with Spain, whatever be the ultimate outcome of this conflict; and I believe that Spain—and those who prophesy an early decision may be wrong—whatever the outcome, will share that sentiment. Supposing those who use that argument are right. Supposing that the honourable Member for Bishop Auckland is right when he tells us that General Franco must not be allowed to win. If that is the will of honourable Gentlemen opposite, I repeat that it is no good talking about the opening of frontiers. If that is your view, you have to take action to ensure a certain result, and the only action which would be effective is actual intervention on our own part. Unless you are to do that it is no use speaking in such a threatening way.

MR. DALTON: The Right Honourable Gentleman is not quoting me quite correctly. I said that it is a British interest that General Franco should not win.

MR. EDEN: I have the honourable Gentleman's words here: "I do say that on broad interests General Franco must not win."—[OFFICIAL REPORT, 19th July 1937; col. 1820, vol. 326.]

I want to deal with a very important speech made by the Right Honourable Gentleman the Member for South Hackney. I want first to take the preliminary point which he

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made. He spoke, as the honourable Gentleman the Member for Bishop Auckland has spoken today, about class consciousness, which, he said, was responsible for the alleged mistakes in our foreign policy. It is a very unpleasant-sounding phrase and I have not the least idea what it means, but I would note in passing that the honourable Gentleman and I had the privilege of being educated at the same public school and that we proceeded to colleges associated with that public school in the two universities. I do not know whether that is what is meant by class consciousness. There is only one difference between us: he was an ornament both at Eton and at King's, whereas I was neither an ornament at Eton nor at Christ Church. Otherwise it is an exact description of what he called just now, "each to his own kind."

MR. DALTON: If the Right Honourable Gentleman is bringing the discussion down to what I may call a personal plane, it is worth observing that the authority I quoted in support of my Right Honourable Friend's diagnosis was himself educated at Eton and Corpus Christi, Cambridge, namely, the military correspondent of *The Times*.

MR. EDEN: It becomes more and more interesting. I imagine that what the honourable Gentleman and the Right Honourable Gentleman the Member for South Hackney mean is that because this is a Centre, or, if you prefer to call it, a Right Government, therefore we like to associate with Centre and Right Governments in foreign policy. If this ridiculous phrase has any meaning at all, that is what it means. At the moment it so happens that our most intimate relations by far in foreign affairs are with the French Government, who are a Government of the Left, and I am bound to say that in the many exchanges I have been privileged to have with French Ministers, of the Left, Right, or

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Centre, in the course of the last two years, I have never known one who came up to me and said, "I would like to be your friend but, look out, I am terrified of class consciousness."

Let me come back to the Right Honourable Member for South Hackney. None of us on this side of the House differs from him in the aims which he put forward. Nobody more than the Foreign Secretary of this country desires a world organization whose authority shall be unchallenged. We know only too well that only when the world enjoys such an authority will peace unquestionably be supreme. But I have to face, as the Right Honourable Member for South Hackney has not got to face, the practical difficulties and the weakness in the League membership today. I am not arguing whose fault that is—say it is all our fault if you wish. The difficulty is that of seven great Powers only three are members of the League. How can anyone possibly say, "If you only could put faith and confidence into it you will have the overwhelming force of the League." The force of the League is not overwhelming at the present time. Nobody regrets it more than I do.

The Right Honourable Gentleman talked about "semi-isolation." If he would use another phrase and talk about "incomplete security" I should entirely agree with him. But do honourable Members opposite really believe that the advent of a Socialist government here would change all that? I must respectfully point out that in France it has not changed it, and it would not change it, believe me, if there were a Socialist government here. I should be only too anxious to change the government if I thought the advent of a Socialist government in this country would bring about a miraculous change in the international situation, but it

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would not, because the causes go much deeper, and, with respect, they were beginning to make themselves felt as far back as 1931. If he, the Right Honourable Gentleman, will turn up the debates of that year he will find the phrase in which I, as an insignificant Member of the Opposition, drew his attention to certain anxieties which were beginning to appear—he thought they were beginning to appear, in his view. These processes are processes much wider than those we have been considering this afternoon. We shall not get an enduring peace, I care not what government is in power in this country, until all nations accept to be bound, as we accept to be bound, by international law, and until the force against any potential aggressor is overwhelming. Neither of these conditions exists today and that is why we view with such anxiety the international situation.

I agree with every word which has been said in the debate about the unsatisfactory state of the world today. I deplore as much as the honourable Member the growing disrespect for treaties, and we see only too clearly the ultimate consequences if that practice continues. In that connection I have noted of late a tendency to use as part of the diplomatic machinery methods which are highly dangerous. There is an inclination to threaten, to issue orders from the house-tops, to proclaim what is virtually an ultimatum and to call it peace. Such methods will never have any response here. Such orders will never be obeyed by the British public. We are ready enough to make our contribution to the peace of the world. We are ready enough to discuss difficulties and issues with those concerned, but we are not prepared to stand and deliver at anyone's command.

Let me, then, in response to the honourable Gentleman's plea, try to sum up the foundations of our foreign policy

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in the uncertain conditions which exist today. While we are determined, should the necessity arise, to defend our own vital interests and fulfil our international obligations, we will embark on no action which would be contrary to the text or the spirit of the Covenant, or contrary to the Pact of Paris which we have signed. We believe in the principle of the settlement of disputes by peaceful means and we will do our utmost to secure a general acceptance and observance of that principle. While we recognize that the League is at present seriously handicapped by incomplete membership, we believe it still provides the best means for obtaining that result. We shall not be deaf to proposals for League reform, provided they are really calculated to strengthen international confidence and to make the League more capable of fulfilling the aims I have outlined. Such being our object it follows—and here I answer the honourable Gentleman—that we will join no anti-Communist and no anti-Fascist *bloc*. It is nations' foreign policies, not their internal policies, with which we are concerned. We will work wholeheartedly with other nations who are like-minded with us, and there are many such. We offer co-operation to all, but we will accept dictation from none.

In my speech I have failed to make, and I appreciate it, any reference to the task to which I go tonight, and perhaps the House will allow me just to say this. The honourable Gentleman defined the other day in a remarkable speech his desire for co-operation with the United States. He used certain words which were to this effect: "Would we in this dangerous and difficult Far Eastern situation go as far as the United States, in full accord with them, not rushing in front but not being left behind." I wholly accept that definition as our guide. We realize, in conditions as they are in

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the world today we must realize, the difficulties of the Far Eastern situation, and I can only assure the House that it is in that spirit that I go to Brussels tonight, anxious to contribute what little lies in my power in a situation in which nobody can envy the Foreign Secretary of the day.

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Mr. Eden's last public speech as Foreign Secretary was made at a meeting of the West Midland Federation of the Junior Imperial League at Birmingham Town Hall on 12th February 1938.

I CANNOT tell you how much your welcome means to me. And how heartening this gathering must be both to the Chairman of the League, Lord Dunglass, and to the Chairman of your own Federation, Mr. Cartland.

But what has really encouraged me is your wish to come to this great meeting. It is the answer to those of your critics who say either that youth is not interested in politics today or that it is of no consequence what people of your generation do or think. Here in the West Midlands area you have shown by your organization of this meeting and your attendance at it how vital is your interest in national and international affairs. This in itself is heartening evidence of our country's future. I am proud to think that my political home is amongst you.

If I say that the life of a Foreign Secretary is a busy and anxious one, do not think that I am complaining; but in the present state of the world the difficulties are bound at times to seem overwhelming, and they would indeed be overwhelming without the sympathy and understanding of the younger generation. I say especially the "younger generation" because the Government today must strive in its foreign policy not only for peace in our time but for peace in yours. And if we are to have peace in your time it means that in any agreements we make today there must be no sac-

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rifice of principles and no shirking of responsibilities merely to obtain quick results that may not be permanent. It is only by the recognition and fulfilment of these principles and responsibilities that we shall lay the foundation on which you will have to build. And so it is that while we are ready to make our contribution to strengthen peace, it is well understood that others must make their contribution too. We offer friendship to all, but on equal terms. For it is not by seeking to buy temporary goodwill that peace is made, but on a basis of frank reciprocity with mutual respect.

Great importance attaches to the attitude of those who have grown up in these troubled times when the world is beset with so many anxieties. Let me draw a parallel and note a contrast between my own experience and yours. The years before 1914 were a period of great anxiety and uncertainty in international affairs; that is the parallel. The contrast is that your generation today is far more conscious of what is happening in the world than we were at that time. I devoutly hope that the contrast is to prove even greater, and that you are not going to be called upon to shoulder the same responsibilities as we were. But that, of course, does not mean that the strength of the nation has been sapped or its stamina weakened. For in a very changing world there is one thing which does not change—the qualities which have created for the British nation the position it holds in the world today. Those who take a pessimistic view of our future would do well to study again the records of our past, they would do well to note the constant re-assertion of that same British character which, in spite of failures and defects, has made our history. So long as that remains, true and unimpaired, I see no cause for pessimism, or for that particular

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form of political pessimism which goes by the name of defeatism. An ugly name for an ugly thing.

When the Great War came to an end we believed we were laying the foundation of world peace and international co-operation in the League of Nations. Disappointment after disappointment would seem to have weakened the fabric of the League, but its foundations remain. Our efforts may be checked, but we are not beaten, and I am optimistic enough to think that the world—I say the world—will build again. What is essential is that we should never abandon our ideals. It is for you and all of us to champion them and to strive for the day when the nations of the world will value them once more.

Let us reflect for a moment upon our conception of international collaboration. Even the most violent critics of the League do not dare to suggest that the ideals behind the League are not right. What they say is that they are before their time, or that human nature cannot be changed. But the spirit of the League does not live only or chiefly in Geneva. It is the spirit that has always inspired us in this country and it is inspiring us more and more today. We see it in our factories: we see it in our workshops: we see it in our Parliament. It is the spirit of greater and more effective co-operation and understanding, and a greater determination not to work in separate units but together. Is it impossible to envisage this spirit reigning in international affairs?

Surely there is no better example of this spirit of co-operation than in the Empire itself, and you are an Imperial League. We here in Great Britain have the duty of making our foreign policy not merely a policy framed from the standpoint of Great Britain but one which seeks to take account in its broad conceptions of the sentiments of an

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Empire. It is our common belief that by working together we can do more for the peace of the world.

I am not going to talk to you tonight about any particular problems in current affairs, but rather of the background against which those affairs can grow and play their part. If this country is to emerge successfully from its anxieties that will be due in the main to the character of the nation. In comparison with this fundamental force the wisdom or the mistakes of those who temporarily direct affairs are of minor significance. Public opinion is not something which finds exact expression from day to day on this question or on that. The little waves of opinion that play on the surface are constantly changing and are fickle guides to those who try to follow and assess them. The deep waters of the public conscience are seldom stirred, but when they are their meaning is unmistakable. It is well for any government of this country that they should be stirred from time to time, for I can assure you (and here I speak for my own field of responsibility) that any real indications of the public mind are invaluable as a guide and as a mentor, and equally stimulating as an encouragement to go forward and to do better.

Whenever I am called upon to address a public meeting in the country, it is an inspiration to establish contact with the people whose servants the Government are. One can work out the details of foreign policy—and troublesome these details often are—in a room overlooking Saint James's Park in London, but the influence that really creates confidence is the conviction that the broad lines of conduct in foreign policy are endorsed by the nation. Moreover, so long as the heart of the nation is sound—and it is so—there is no cause to be downhearted about our authority in the world nor to be sensitive to how other nations regard us. Indeed the facts

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of our internal strength are not such as to justify pessimism—far from it. It is, of course, true that a long and sustained effort is required before we achieve what it must be our object to achieve, the greatest measure of happiness and prosperity for the greatest number of our people. Yet, if we survey the world, is there one single nation with which we would wish to change places? Certainly there is no other great industrial country in the world where the standard of life, the scale of social services, the enjoyment of equality before the law is superior to our own. With most the comparison is greatly to our advantage. Certain it is that we must persevere in our endeavours to raise the standard of life of the people of all sections of the community. In the last generation, without doubt, progress has been made towards the elimination of poverty. Contrasted even with 1931 there is a marked improvement, but it is not enough and we cannot be content while there are still more than a million persons without work in this country. In battling with ever-changing conditions we must not fear to use new methods. Modern Conservatism must be associated, not with reaction, as our critics would have you believe, but with progress. The part we have played in the National Governments of recent years justifies us in that claim. In the work that lies ahead we must be watchful to ensure that, as a consequence of party strife, the aims of the individual governments, however composed, do not become unduly influenced by slogans. If it is nonsense to speak of the capitalist system as the fount of all evil, national and international, it is also an exaggeration to regard every form of state control as injurious to the national welfare.

I know the difficulties which beset us all. But youth looks forward with vigour and with faith. The one hopeless creed

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is fatalism and the belief that the struggle for your ideals is not worth while, the feeling that somehow your ideals will be cheated in the end. Few of us perhaps realize the privileges we enjoy until they are challenged: often we do not appreciate them at all. Of the privileges which we have and which our fathers have fought for at home and abroad, the best is freedom: freedom to think and to speak: freedom to act as we deem right in the religious, the intellectual, the political and the social field: freedom to live our lives according to the standards which our conscience dictates to us.

If once we forsake this freedom which we have inherited, not only shall we bitterly repent it, but we shall betray the trust which it is our duty to hand on. I am not far from your generation in time, and I hope I am at one with it in spirit. Freedom is the common link which binds together every generation, as it has bound us throughout our history and as it has bound us particularly in times of trouble. Let me say this to you. Freedom only realizes itself fully in service to others.

You are, most of you, still at the outset of your careers, and it may be that some of you have yet to decide what career you wish to follow. But whatever be your choice I am sure the thing to remember is that all careers are worth while; all careers are honourable if they are looked on as part of service to the nation. If I speak to you of my own experience, it is only because, so far as it goes, it applies to each one of you here.

The essential factor in diplomacy, as in every branch of life, is the attitude of mind in which we approach our tasks in the present and our prospects in the future. Let that attitude be one of refusal to accept defeat. If that attitude be spread widely throughout the nation, and especially through-

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out your own generation, on whom the nation will have to depend in the coming years, then this country cannot be defeated in its purposes and in what it stands for.

Our youth movements are less organized and less vocal here than elsewhere, but where they exist let them seek every opportunity of service wherever it may occur; in your case, whether it be inside or outside your own Imperial League, there is an individual job for each one of you. If we are to keep our faith in our own ways of life we must prove that they can help the community of which we are all members, as effectively and as devotedly as other ways of life in other countries. Our own youth movements are inevitably different from those in totalitarian States, but among the voluntary associations which exist there is ample scope for wider and ever wider service to the State. Democracy has its own objectives and must pursue them in its own way. This does not mean defiance or antagonism towards other countries; friendship between democracies and dictatorships must not become impossible. We do not wish to see the lasting cleavage of democracies ranging themselves against dictatorships. I feel that the future rests with you to concentrate not on the differences but on what is common to both. But remember this implies that you should know your own faith, and let it be a faith born of conviction.

I think that the main lesson of diplomacy is that in the long run nothing is impossible. At particular moments particular problems may seem impossible to solve, but that is a very different thing from saying that they cannot be solved at all. Circumstances are constantly changing, and we have to keep our minds open and supple to meet them as they arise and to seize the opportunities they may provide. But in order to do so we must above all try to understand our

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fellow men, not to have preconceived notions as to their intentions, but to place ourselves in their position and to judge as dispassionately as possible what people will be likely to do in such and such a situation, and what would be their motives. That may sound very simple but in fact it is extremely difficult to divest oneself of prejudices, for the simple reason that pride refuses to admit that they *are* prejudices. It is so much easier to be "pro" this or "anti" that than it is to be understanding, both of this and of that.

Let us contemplate our national position at this time. Amid the shrill conflict of rival ideologies our people hold to a middle course. Neither extreme makes an appeal to us. We are attached to liberty and tolerance and we know, in the words of the last speech made by the late Lord Grey, that "order must be preserved in order that liberty may be enjoyed." It is our determination to build upon well-tried foundations a social and political system, the constant objective of which shall be the greatest good of the greatest number. The eyes of the world are upon our country today, watching every movement that we make and guessing every thought that we think. At times people say that we are decadent, that our institutions are out of date and have ceased to function. We know that this is not so, but we must see to it that others are not misled. Wrong deductions about this country have done great harm in the past. They can do still greater harm in the future. It is up to each one of us to avoid that danger.

Let all of you members of the Junior Imperial League here go home tonight resolved to combat all forms of defeatism in every walk of life; to make your faith in democracy alive and practical, and to cherish above all your belief in England and her people.

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On Friday, 18th February 1938, conversations took place at No. 10 Downing Street between the Prime Minister, Mr. Eden, and the Italian Ambassador, Count Grandi. A special meeting of the Cabinet was summoned for Saturday, 19th February. A further meeting of the Cabinet took place on Sunday afternoon, 20th February, and late the same evening Mr. Eden sent his resignation to the Prime Minister. He explained his position to the House of Commons on 21st February.

I RISE to ask the leave of the House to make a personal explanation. This is for me, both on personal and political grounds, a most painful occasion. No man would willingly sever the links which bind him with colleagues and friends, still less when, as in my case, I am only too conscious to how great an extent those colleagues have encouraged and sustained me during the two years that I have held the responsible office from which I have just resigned. But, Sir, there are occasions when strong political convictions must override all other considerations. Of such occasions only the individual himself can be the judge; no man can be the keeper of another man's conscience. Therefore, I stand before the House today to give the House in a few brief sentences an account of my reasons for having resigned the Office of Foreign Secretary.

First let me make plain that the ultimate aim of us all, the objective of the foreign policy of this country, is, and must always be, the maintenance of peace. If, however, peace is to be enduring it must rest on foundations of frank reci-

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procity and mutual respect. If we accept this basis for our foreign policy it follows that we must be ready to negotiate with all countries, whatever their form of government, in order to promote international understanding, but we must also be watchful that in our conception of such negotiations, and in the method by which we seek to further them, we are in fact strengthening, not undermining, the foundations upon which international confidence rests. With that introduction I come to the immediate issue which unhappily divides me from my colleagues. It will be known to the House that certain exchanges of view have been taking place between the Italian Government and His Majesty's Government in respect to the opening of conversations between the two Governments. Indeed, His Majesty's Government have been committed to the principle of such conversations ever since my Right Honourable Friend the Prime Minister himself exchanged letters with Signor Mussolini last summer. There is no dispute anywhere about that.

The immediate issue is as to whether such official conversations should be opened in Rome now. It is my conviction that the attitude of the Italian Government to international problems in general, and to this country in particular, is not yet such as to justify this course. The ground has been in no respect prepared. Propaganda against this country by the Italian Government is rife throughout the world. I am myself pledged to this House not to open conversations with Italy until this hostile propaganda ceases. I do not want to stress the personal position, which is relatively unimportant, but I must mention, in passing, the difficult position in which I must have been placed had I to announce to the House in existing conditions the opening of such conversations. Moreover, little progress, in fact,

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though much in promise, has yet been made with the solution of the Spanish problem. Let me make it plain. I do not suggest and I would not advocate that the Government should refuse conversations with the Italian Government, or indeed with any other government which shows any disposition to conversations with us for the betterment of international understandings, yet we must be convinced that the conditions in which these conversations take place are such as to make for the likelihood, if not for the certainty, of their success. I contend that these conditions do not exist today.

I am compelled for a few moments, if the House will allow me, to review the past with this situation as the background. While I was privileged to be Foreign Secretary I was responsible for several attempts in the past eighteen months to better our relations with Italy. They have all failed in the main, though not wholly, because of the Spanish problem. In January last year, after difficult negotiations, we signed the Anglo-Italian Agreement, but within a very few days, indeed almost simultaneously, the first considerable consignment of Italians left for Spain. It may be held that this was not a breach of the letter of our understanding, but no one, I think, surely will contend that it did not run counter to its spirit. That same agreement contained a clause—a specific clause—dealing with the cessation of propaganda, yet propaganda was scarcely dimmed for an instant. Again, last summer my Right Honourable Friend the Prime Minister and Signor Mussolini exchanged letters, and after that in a few days the relations between our two countries took a marked turn for the better. Of that there can be no doubt. Then what happened? Then ensued the incidents in the Mediterranean, with which the House is

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familiar, and the glorification by the Head of the Italian Government of the victories of Italian forces in Spain.

My submission is that we cannot risk a further repetition of these experiences. Therefore, it is my contention that before His Majesty's Government open official conversations in Rome with the Italian Government, conversations which have, and rightly have, as an objective not only an improvement of Anglo-Italian relations, but appeasement in the Mediterranean as a whole—before that can be done we must make further progress with the Spanish problem; we must agree not only on the need for withdrawal and on the conditions of withdrawal—we have had assurances enough of that in the past—but we must go further and show the world not only promise but achievement. The withdrawal must have begun in earnest before those conversations in Rome can be held on a really solid basis of goodwill, which is essential to success.

I think it likely that the House may wonder why I at this hour place so much emphasis on performance as opposed to promise, and even why I speak so much of the Spanish problem. It is only because it happens to be in this instance an example. We cannot consider this problem except in relation to the international situation as a whole. The conditions today are not the same as they were last July, nor even the same as they were last January. Recent months, recent weeks, recent days have seen the successive violation of international agreements and attempts to secure political decisions by forcible means. We are in the presence of the progressive deterioration of respect for international obligations. It is quite impossible to judge these things in a vacuum. In the light—my judgement may well be wrong—of the present international situation, this is a moment for

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this country to stand firm, not to plunge into negotiations unprepared, with the full knowledge that the chief obstacle to their success has not been resolved.

The programme which I have outlined seems to me a not unreasonable programme. Indeed, if the desire of the two parties be to reach agreement on all subjects outstanding between them, including Spain, I am quite confident that it is the best method to pursue. It is the traditional method of diplomacy to prepare for conversations before they are formally opened. It is seldom right to depart from that traditional method, which has been tested by time and experience. It is certainly never right to do so because one party to the negotiations intimates that it is now or never. Agreements that are worth while are never made on the basis of a threat. Nor in the past has this country been willing to negotiate in such conditions. I repeat that if our objective is to promote a Mediterranean agreement, to promote lasting appeasement, then the method which I have described is not only the best, but the only one possible, and the only one consonant with our position in the world.

I may be told that by insisting that positive progress must be made with the Spanish question before formal conversations are opened between His Majesty's Government and the Italian Government in Rome, I am asking one party to the negotiations to yield in advance certain advantages that that party now enjoys. I shall not for one moment seek to argue whether those advantages, if indeed they be advantages, are legitimate ones. But it has never entered into my conception to suggest that the Italian forces should be withdrawn from Spain alone, but only that the Italian Government should agree and carry out with others a fair scheme

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for the proportionate withdrawal of all foreigners from Spain.

I am conscious—that is, of course, why I stand here—that my Right Honourable Friend the Prime Minister and my colleagues take another view. They believe in their policy, and they believe in their method, and they may be right. But, if they are right, their chances of success will certainly be enhanced if their policy is pursued by another Foreign Secretary, one who has complete conviction in the methods which he is being asked to employ. It may even be that my resignation will facilitate the course of these negotiations. If so, nobody will be more pleased than I.

I have spoken to the House of the immediate difference that has divided me from my colleagues, but I should not be frank with the House if I were to pretend that it is an isolated issue as between my Right Honourable Friend the Prime Minister and myself. It is not. Within the last few weeks upon one most important decision of foreign policy which did not concern Italy at all, the difference was fundamental. My Right Honourable Friend is, I know, conscious of this. Moreover, it has recently become clear to me, and I think to him, that there is between us a real difference of outlook and method. It may be argued, perhaps I shall be told, that this is not a difference of fundamental principles. Well, in the sense that the objective of all foreign policy is the maintenance of peace, that is, of course, perfectly true. But in international affairs, can anyone define where outlook and methods end and principles begin? If the Government of this country is to speak with undivided voice in international affairs, it is essential that the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary should have a similar outlook and wish to pursue similar methods. The more intense the

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interest which each one of them takes in the conduct of international affairs, the more imperative does this unity become.

My Right Honourable Friend has strong views on foreign policy, and I respect him for it; and I have strong views, too. Since we are, as I know, both of us conscious that those views have resulted in a divergence, not of aim, but of outlook and of approach, it is clearly in the national interest that unity should be restored at the earliest possible moment. Of late the conviction has steadily grown upon me that there has been too keen a desire on our part to make terms with others rather than that others should make terms with us. This never was the attitude of this country in the past. It should not, in the interests of peace, be our attitude today. The events of the last few days, which have dealt with one particular issue, have merely brought to a head other and more far-reaching differences, not, if you will, in objectives, but in outlook and approach. I do not believe that we can make progress in European appeasement, more particularly in the light of the events of the past few days—and those events must surely be present in all our minds—if we allow the impression to gain currency abroad that we yield to constant pressure. I am certain in my own mind that progress depends above all on the temper of the nation, and that temper must find expression in a firm spirit. That spirit, I am confident, is there. Not to give voice to it is, I believe, fair neither to this country nor to the world.

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Mr. Eden further explained his resignation when he addressed his constituents at Leamington on 25th February 1938.

I FEEL it my duty to take this first opportunity of expressing to you, the electors of the Warwick and Leamington Division, the reasons which led me to resign my position as Foreign Secretary. As one who is himself a convinced believer in Democracy, I could clearly follow no other course.

I have told Parliament my reasons. I now tell them to you, the electors of this Constituency at the heart of England, which it has been my privilege to represent at Westminster for fourteen years.

But there is more to it even than that, for tonight I am speaking to a number of those who throughout my public life have given me their unswerving loyalty and support. No Member of Parliament has ever had a more devoted band of workers to help him than you have shown yourselves to be in the Warwick and Leamington Division. I owe it to you, to render an account of my action, and this I propose to do tonight.

First, however, let me seek to express my thanks—thanks for the support which you have given me in the past, thanks, even more, for the messages which have come to me from all parts of this Constituency within the last few days. I have appreciated them more than words can say, and, while I am thanking you, perhaps I may thank also that wider public which has literally showered me with letters and telegrams representative of all shades of political opinion.

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There is one other tribute I must pay. During the last two years as Under-Secretary, and for much longer than that in a less official capacity, Lord Cranborne has given me invaluable help at the Foreign Office. It is no exaggeration to say that without his co-operation the burden of work would have been intolerable.

I can never adequately express what his counsel, his patience, his courage, his unswerving sense of duty have meant to me. Whatever the future may hold for some of us there can be no doubt that Lord Cranborne is destined to play a much larger part in national affairs in the years that lie ahead.

Now, let me deal with a preliminary. It has, I understand, been suggested that the decision which I have come to was influenced to some extent at least by the stress and strain of the office which I had been holding for two years. That, in consequence, my judgement and health having been impaired, I have taken a step which, had I been in better health, I should not have entertained. You can judge for yourselves whether I look like a sick man. You shall be my witnesses that there is no shred of truth in that suggestion. The decision I took was taken, not of course because I was tired, but because of the conviction, which nothing that has occurred since has caused me to modify, that no other course was open to me. Tonight, nearly a week afterwards, I can say to you with absolute sincerity that, looking back upon that decision, I am more than ever convinced it was right. I should be despising myself this evening had I taken any other course.

There are two main issues with which I will seek to deal tonight. The first is whether the advice which I gave my

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colleagues as to the moment and the conditions for the opening of conversations with Italy was good advice.

The second is whether, since my colleagues differed from my judgement, I should have continued to serve as Foreign Secretary or no. Let me take the second issue first.

Whatever other verdict may finally be passed upon my actions in the last week, I have no shadow of a doubt upon that score. Yet, lest there should be any doubt in any quarter, let me once again make the position plain. It may be said that this issue, however important, was concerned with time and method, with the conduct of Foreign Affairs and not its ultimate aims. Since, therefore, my colleagues considered my advice wrong, I should, so the argument runs, have accepted their judgement and carried on. I cannot take that view, because as Foreign Secretary I was responsible to Parliament and to the nation for the conduct of foreign policy. No one else has that same responsibility in the same degree. If I had not resigned, it would have been my duty to stand up in the House of Commons and say, "I believe that this is the best method for dealing with the problem of Anglo-Italian relations. There are risks in it, but I believe that it will succeed and that, in the end, it will contribute to European appeasement." Unhappily I cannot believe this—indeed, I believe exactly the opposite—so how could I recommend such a course to the House of Commons? But that was not all. Not only should I have had to recommend this policy to the House of Commons, a policy which I regarded as precipitate, but I should have had to conduct the consequent negotiations myself—negotiations the outcome of which may have the gravest consequences for our position in the world. I should thus have been a

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hypocrite and my conduct unfair to Parliament and to the Nation.

Moreover, the Prime Minister has himself strong views, not only upon ultimate aims of foreign policy, but also as to conduct and method. He is, of course, fully entitled to have them. But I also have such views, and they are not the same. I have done my utmost to bridge the difference between the Prime Minister and myself and have worked in full loyalty with him. I know that he has done the same.

As I said at Birmingham only a fortnight ago, the Prime Minister and I have been working in closest contact—a contact which I devoutly hoped, even then, might be maintained.

Last week-end, however, I realized—as I know the Prime Minister realized—that this difference of outlook was deep and real and the only possible course for a Foreign Secretary in these circumstances was to resign. No man can conduct Foreign Affairs to the best advantage by the methods of another. To attempt this would be to make the worst of both worlds.

The course I took was, I am unshakenly convinced, in the national interest. Yet no one, I hope, will believe that it was an easy course.

For more than six years my life's work has lain at the Foreign Office. For the last two the responsibilities of the Head of the Department have been mine. During all that period it was inevitable that anyone so circumstanced should have grown immersed in the work and should have become bound by ties of the closest friendship with those, both at home and abroad, who were helping him in his work. To sever those ties was to me most painful. There was, however, no alternative, and if in the cool light of

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subsequent reflection I had this evening to take that decision over again, I could take no other.

And now let me turn to the merits of the question. I have been told that the course I have advocated was tantamount to asking one party to a negotiation to stand in a white sheet. I never proposed any such thing. All that I maintained, all that I still maintain, is that progress should first have been made with the fulfilment of engagements already entered into before seeking to negotiate other agreements covering the same issues. If we must not be obsessed by the past, we should not entirely ignore it.

The course the Government have chosen is an indication of the sincerity of their desire to reach an agreement, it is not necessarily an indication of wise judgement in international affairs. I cannot help feeling that it was perfectly possible to stand firm and obtain the same results, if they are there to be obtained, without the risks attendant on the present course.

This deep anxiety is present to my mind tonight and I must give it expression. Is it to be agreement when you can get it negotiated on a solid basis, or is it to be agreement if you can get it regardless of the basis?

Whatever the answer to that question, the Government have embarked upon their course. They have decided to employ a certain approach to Anglo-Italian friendship. The decision is made. Parliament has endorsed it. Very well. The Government must then go ahead on the course which they have chosen, and neither by word nor deed do I desire now to say anything to make their task more difficult. On the contrary I most sincerely wish them success in their endeavours.

In this connection you will perhaps have observed that

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in my speech of resignation to the House of Commons I refrained from referring to any documents, to any interviews with Ambassadors, communications from foreign States, and so forth. I did so deliberately, because I knew that papers once referred to must be made public, and I recognized the impossibility of publication at this hour. Yet there is one point with which I must deal, for I have been challenged upon it.

In the House of Commons I stated that "It is seldom right to depart from the traditional method of diplomacy which has been tested by time and experience. It is certainly never right to do so because one party to the negotiations intimates that it is now or never. Agreements that are worth while are never made on the basis of a threat."

I stand by every word that I said in the House of Commons. I definitely formed the opinion last week-end that the meaning of certain communications received from a foreign government was "now or never," and that those communications read in the context of recent history were open to no other interpretation than that which I placed upon them. I made my view plain to my colleagues at the time. I have never varied it since.

My colleagues, however, took a different view. It may be suggested that I should press them on this point, which is an important issue of interpretation dividing us, but this I am not prepared to do, for I do not believe it to be in the national interest. I appreciate that it is impossible to make public the relevant documents at this moment. I am content to wait and to accept the verdict of history.

What then should be our attitude at this time of international anxiety? It is a period, if ever there was one in our history, when personal feelings can be of no account. For

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myself I continue to be a convinced believer in the need for National Government, and in such government our party, the modern progressive Conservative Party, to which I am proud to belong, has its full part to play. Nor must we forget that if the party be disrupted the nation suffers, and it is the nation that matters.

In the sphere of international affairs it is the Government's duty at this time to be vigilant and to be firm. It is well to seek to lay old animosities, but not of course at the expense of old friendships.

It is with the great democracies of Europe and America that our natural affinities must lie. We must stand by our conception of international order, without which there can be no lasting peace. Nor must we for one instant weaken in our own faith in parliamentary government and individual liberty. These are the things that count. They are the fundamental articles of our faith and our contribution to what survives of civilization today. However anxious the future, the need for unity and forbearance becomes not less but greater.

In that spirit let us approach the future. It is in that spirit that I ask tonight for your continued loyalty and support.

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Lord Halifax succeeded Mr. Eden as Foreign Secretary in February 1938.

Austria became incorporated in the German Reich in March. From 25th February, when he spoke to his constituents after his resignation, until 26th April, when he gave an address on "England" at the Festival Banquet of the Royal Society of St. George, Mr. Eden did not make any public statement.

THERE has been conferred on me this evening one of the greatest honours that can be conferred on any Englishman, that of speaking on England to this great gathering which commemorates our Patron Saint. It is an honour of which I am deeply sensible. England is a theme which has inspired our greatest poets and orators. For England men have lived and died. No man could approach so lofty a theme without mingled feelings of pride and of his own unworthiness. On such an occasion, would not each one of us wish to make a profession of faith in England, her past, her present, her future? It is in such a spirit that I approach my task this evening.

We are the heirs of a great tradition. Whether we show it or not, we are immensely proud of that tradition and we are determined to be worthy of it. For four years during the Great War Englishmen proved their worth as steadfastly and doggedly as they have ever proved it. We know that they would prove it again—the character of the race is unchanged. However uncertain the future, that much we can read and that is what matters most.

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What is it that above all else England has sought to bequeath to succeeding centuries?

Not her armies, fleets, and aeroplanes, not her victories on land or sea or in the air, not even her commercial experience or her industrial skill, but the art of self-government by a free people.

What is the ideal we set ourselves in that sphere, the ideal towards which the English people have been subconsciously groping or actively striving through the centuries of their history? It is our conception that, while a well-ordered state must seek the greatest good of the greatest number, it protects the rights and liberties of majority and minority alike; it must guarantee to the humblest of its citizens, as to the greatest, full individual liberty and undoubted equality before the law. So long as an Englishman obeys his country's laws, it is the duty of government to ensure for him freedom to think, freedom to worship, freedom to speak, freedom to act as he will. This conception is mirrored in our parliamentary life, where today any minority, even the smallest, even a minority of one, is entitled to, and is indeed certain to receive, the benign and most effective protection of the Chair.

We are right to set such store by this heritage of freedom, for unless men are free, how can they work together on equal terms and with mutual understanding? Can anyone doubt that the universal realization of freedom would be a great step towards the establishment of permanent peace? If men were free—truly free in all nations—could think, speak, communicate as they would with each other across the frontiers, no better antidote could be provided to methods of propaganda which are a present danger to peace. Conversely, the more freedom is repressed, the wider the area where

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its true practice is unknown, the greater the temptation to the abuse of power and the graver the risks of conflict. For us freedom is a condition of national life, for the world it is a condition of true international understanding. There can be no lasting peace without freedom.

Thus, then, do we see England tonight. A land where the conception of ordered freedom and constitutional government shall prevail; a land which seeks by the example of its sons to inspire others with its own belief in toleration, liberty, and peace; a land which seeks to adapt and not to destroy; a land whose people, even in face of the strident challenge of the modern world, will not lose heart.

But let us not belittle the significance of that challenge.

I am one, we are not so numerous today, of what is known as the War generation. Nothing seemed less likely, when the Armistice was signed, than that within twenty years nations should hear once again the same glorification of war. Yet so it is. Nations are told that they are the bravest on earth, but brave for what? To seek to evolve the arts of peace? No, to be ready to slaughter another brave nation somewhere else. All the panoply of arms, of drum and trumpet, is out again; so short has been that post-War era when man had faith in long-enduring peace.

It is surely clear to all that the care-free days after the War, when we thought we could rest on our laurels and return to the old ways of life with the old security, are gone for our generation. There are periods of history when man seems to have stood still. There are other periods when he has rushed forward at a pace which could not be checked or controlled. We are destined for good or ill—we do not know the end yet—to live in such a latter period.

One thing, therefore, is certain. We in this country can-

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not stand still. We shall be caught in the onward surge. It is utterly futile to imagine that we are involved in a European crisis that may pass as it has come. We are involved in a crisis of humanity all the world over. We are living in one of those great periods of history which are awe-inspiring in their responsibilities and in their consequences. Stupendous forces are loose, hurricane forces.

Democracy, as Lord Baldwin has so often reminded us, is the most difficult to practise of all forms of government. It is in many respects easier to allow others to do our thinking for us than to work out for ourselves our individual duty as citizens and do it. A democratic state depends for its successful working upon the corporate effort of all its citizens. Once let it deviate from the narrow path too far either to the left or to the right, and democracy degenerates rapidly into licence on the one hand or repressive restrictions upon liberty on the other, either of which inevitably leads to tyranny. And then democracy is doomed. Therefore, to keep our democratic faith and practice intact in face of the forces now loose in the world calls for a remarkable combination of wisdom, courage, and restraint, of prudent leadership and sustained national effort.

The War dealt European civilization a staggering blow. It has denuded countries which have borne the strain of those years of the best of their manhood. It has bred enmities and bitterness which have been sharpened and not erased by the passage of time. Countries which in the War survived impending disaster were more intent on preserving the present than on providing for the future. And so the story of frustrated ambitions and disappointed hopes unfolded itself, and a new and harsher Europe has arisen on the ruins of the old.

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Three and a half years ago that great statesman and soldier, General Smuts, sounded a note of warning, in his Rectorial Address at St. Andrews University, an address which I should like each one of you to read now; he used these words:

“The issue of freedom, the most fundamental issue of all our civilization, is once more squarely raised by what is happening in the world, and cannot be evaded. The danger signals are up in many colours and in many lands.”

If that was true when General Smuts spoke, how much truer it is today. The danger signals are indeed up. None can mistake them now.

We, in England, who had our full share of the trials and sufferings of the War, escaped the worst of the years which followed. Perhaps for that reason we have been slow to grasp the full import of what was happening. But as that realization dawns in our minds and grows into a hard noon-day light, let our first thought be of our duty to England. Let it be our desire and determination tonight that we shall so acquit ourselves that, throughout the world, the name of England shall be honoured and respected. How is this to be realized? We know that England stands today for freedom, for toleration, and for justice; but it is not enough to say that. For our faith in the future of mankind we should be prepared to make every contribution in our power.

England would wish, I believe, to see prevail throughout the world those conditions which she has tried and is trying to create in her own land, an equal opportunity for all to develop to their full their own individuality without let or hindrance. We have found that one essential condition of such progress is the rule of law. This being so, what must be our aim? We must first wish to see the rule of law

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between nations acknowledged. We must wish this because it is a condition of civilized life between countries. We must therefore also wish justice to be done by just means. This must make us readily accept, as trustees of a great part of the earth's surface, the duties of trusteeship, the need of understanding, of toleration, and of generosity. The England of today stands for something positive, the creation at last of a comity of nations in which each can develop and flourish and give to their uttermost their own special contribution to the diversity of life.

I am a convinced believer in democracy, yet it would be foolish, perhaps fatal to the very survival of democracy, to ignore the stupendous achievements realized under other forms of government. A truly immense effort has been made in the last few years by autocratic states for the fulfilment of the purposes they have set before them. Their methods cannot be ours, but we should not fail to note the passionate fervour with which they are being pursued.

The lesson is there to read. If we are to uphold our ideals, our conception of life, both national and international, if we are to see them prevail, then a comparable effort must be made by us and an equal spirit be roused.

Can any of us say that this is true of our country today? Such a national effort calls for the whole-hearted co-operation of all sections of the community, and, more than all sections, of every individual. Such a national effort must entail sacrifices by us, by each one of us, just as others elsewhere have been willing to make sacrifices for what they set out to achieve.

This is a time when every endeavour should surely be made to promote national unity, for it is only as a united nation that we can give of our best; and we have to give

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of our best, and that now, or risk losing the things we treasure most. Party warfare for its own sake should have no place in the scheme of things today. A united effort for the spiritual and material rearmament of the nation is the need of the hour.

We cannot ignore the sombre realities that confront us. But let us equally bear witness to our faith, the faith that inspires all English-speaking peoples, the leaven that has leavened our long proud history. It is for us, the people of England, to see that this great heritage of liberty and temperance shall not perish from the earth.

A WARNING OF DANGERS AHEAD

On 11th June 1938, at Haseley Manor, near Warwick, Mr. Eden referred for the first time since February to foreign affairs and the international situation.

FOR some months I have made no detailed comment upon the international situation. My silence has not of course been due to any lack of interest but to a desire not to say anything which could increase the difficulties of the government of the day. Nor is it my intention to depart from that general attitude now. If I refer to Foreign affairs today, in speaking to you who are my constituents, it is not to make this or that detailed criticism of policy, still less of course to defend any action I myself have taken, but because I am deeply concerned at the broad trend of events in the world.

There are some who are prepared today to take an optimistic view of the international situation. Such optimism is, I am convinced, unfounded. Unhappily, neither the political nor the trade and economic outlook justify it. It is even dangerous to indulge it if it be our intention to preserve the enjoyment of liberties which have been ours for generations.

There is today less liberty in Europe than there has been at any time for centuries. Whatever else the Great War did, it did not make the world safe for democracy. If we are to preserve our own liberties, without a long-drawn-out struggle, the end of which no man can see, we must make

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a national effort much greater than anything that is being attempted at this time.

The future depends mainly upon how far we can achieve national unity in the next few months, how far on the basis of that unity we can rearm spiritually and materially. We are still far from understanding the extent of the dangers that confront us. Therein lies the chief cause for national anxiety today, and not in any failing in the British character or people.

To talk of democratic Britain as decadent, as is so often done in certain foreign countries, is to make the mistake that has only too often been made before. Britain has never been less decadent than she is today. Never have the British people been so ready to make any sacrifice that may be demanded of them in a cause in which they believe. Deep down in every British conscience there are enshrined the same fundamental beliefs for which the free citizen of these islands has always, at need, fought and died. He believes in individual liberty. He has learnt instinctively by the lessons of the long history of his country that government based solely on force benefits neither those who rule nor those who are ruled, that it merely dries up the springs of human enterprise, and could only in the long run take us back to the Dark Ages. A civilization based merely on force is no cure for the ills of the world. It must, in fact, increase them a thousand-fold. It is not by such means that the nations of the world will become happier or more prosperous. That is not, of course, to say that in any civilized state there is no limitation of individual liberty. Every time we conform to law, every time that we pay a tax, our liberty is limited. But we acquiesce in this quite voluntarily, from an appreciation that the good of the individual must be

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subordinated to the good of the community as a whole. That is our faith, a faith which pervades and inspires our whole national life.

The preservation for the world of this fundamental principle of voluntary co-operation between free individuals was a constant objective in the Great War. It was because of our belief in it that the British people, above all other peoples, have been the mainstay of the League of Nations. For the League of Nations is, in its essence, the extension to the international sphere of these ideas which we have applied successfully in our own country and in the British Commonwealth of Nations. If we have made a mistake in the years that have followed the Great War, it is that we, as a nation, have assumed too confidently that our view had really prevailed.

It no doubt seemed incredible that nations that had endured those four years of agony should not have learnt once and for all their lesson. We did not—perhaps it would be truer to say we would not—face the fact that other countries were prepared to employ again those methods which the war had discredited for ever in our eyes. We reduced our own armaments. We clung to a belief in the near achievement of general disarmament. Even when the Disarmament Conference failed, we were slow to recognize the inevitable implications of its failure. It seemed to us inconceivable that statesmen who had themselves experienced the catastrophe, the material loss, the human misery, the moral havoc, to which war must always lead, should be prepared to expose their countries again to such a risk. We still find it difficult to credit. But credit it we must, if the principles for which we fought are not to disappear from the world, if the Great War is not to have been fought in vain. We

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have no longer any excuse for illusion or apathy. The signs of the times are only too easy to read. If we are to avoid catastrophe it can only be by a gigantic and united national effort, sufficient to show those nations which still believe in power politics that force is a weapon which cannot profit the user.

But if such an effort is to be made—and it must be made—it has to have a moral basis. We must stand for something positive, something which can rally to the banner of England all men of goodwill, to whatever section of the community they belong, to whatever political views they may subscribe. We are told today that we must be realists. If that means that we must not shut our eyes to facts no one would wish to quarrel with such advice. But we cannot, if our ideals are to endure in the years to come, content ourselves with merely a passive recognition of unpleasant facts. If that were ever to be our attitude, then our position would be parlous indeed. Realism, so defined, becomes indistinguishable from defeatism. We should then merely be retiring in good order, from position to position, until the battle was lost. Circumstances are, to a great extent, what we make them. That is a lesson that we can learn from others. Germany has ideals, though we may not share them. It is those ideals which have enabled her to become again so formidable a power in the world. She has a cause, the material greatness of Germany. We too have ideals, and we too have a cause, and we must not fear to proclaim and uphold them. In this respect we as Conservatives have a special responsibility. What then in these troubled times should be the rôle of our party?

The answer to that depends upon our conception of modern Conservatism. As a virile progressive force determined

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to uphold our national traditions, attached to our age-long liberties and democratic institutions, it has incomparably the greatest part to play in British political life. But only on these lines. The nation does not want to vote Socialist, still less Communist, but if our own party is to retain its position it can only be as the interpreter of all that is most progressive in our creed, and, as I think, all that is best in it.

While other countries have a perfect right to adopt whatever political system in their view suits them best, and while it is our duty to do all in our power to improve relations with all countries, whatever their forms of government, no true democrat can feel sympathy for the methods of the autocratic states, still less wish to see them reproduced in this country.

As I have emphasized on a previous occasion, it is with the great democracies of Europe and America that our natural affinities lie.

Our faith in our own free tradition is just as robust as that of any autocratic state in its very different methods. As a Conservative party we have to make that plain, not by even apparent discrimination as between alien creeds, but by the clearest affirmation of our own.

Nor must we allow our outlook to be tinged with defeatism.

There is one attitude that the people of this country will never endorse. They will never accept that their own free country cannot organize itself for any purpose just as effectively as any other country, under any other form of government, anywhere else in the world. In the past we have tackled and overcome sterner obstacles even than those that confront us now. There is certainly sufficient cause for anxiety. We have seen recent expression of it in the sphere

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of armaments. There is widespread concern that the progress of our rearmament is too slow. Criticism on this score, if it be constructive, is not harmful. We can never rest content with an inferiority in our air armaments in comparison with any great power within striking distance of these shores.

It has always been our pride that the Conservative Party included all sections of the community within its ranks. If this reputation is to be maintained it is essential that the Conservative Party should be genuinely and sincerely national in its outlook, an upholder of national traditions and institutions and of the national outlook on life, that it should give a strong and vigorous lead to the nation in maintaining British traditions and in conducting our relations with foreign governments in the manner best calculated to earn their respect.

Nobody will quarrel with the Government's wish to bring about appeasement in Europe. Any other intention would be as foolish as it would be wrong. But if appeasement is to mean what it says, it must not be at the expense either of our vital interests, or of our national reputation or of our sense of fair dealing.

Appeasement will be neither real nor lasting at such a price. It would merely make real appeasement more difficult at a later stage. There must always be a point at which we, as a nation, must make a stand and we must clearly make a stand when not to do so would forfeit our self-respect and the respect of others. That is the only sure guide in private or in public relations. Without it we shall drift into ever-widening confusion.

However strong our defences may grow, we can never really be strong if once we sacrifice these rules of conduct.

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For the strength of a nation is not to be measured merely by its armaments, but even more by the moral fibre of those who control them, by the resolution of Government and people in unison because they know that there is but one standard to guide their actions.

You may gain temporary appeasement by a policy of concession to violence, but you do not gain lasting peace that way. It is a grave delusion to suppose that you can. Even more untrue is it to suggest that those who would have wished to see our country take a firmer stand in the last six months on behalf of the principle of good faith in international relations would thereby have plunged this country into war. The very reverse is the truth. The Nyon Agreement to suppress piracy last September was an instance of firm and timely action by this country which contributed to avert the danger of war. Nor was Nyon the only instance in our history. Retreat is not always the path to peace. Our greatest interest is the preservation of peace, but the more general the disrespect of international engagements, the greater the danger to peace. In this connection I would draw your special attention to the remarkable speech made by the United States Secretary of State, Mr. Hull, last week. Every word of it is deserving of the closest study by us all.

We have heard much in the last few days of the most recent developments in the Spanish War, and they have gravely troubled the conscience of the nation. The Government are deeply concerned, and rightly so, at the growth of bombing of civilians, the loss of life, the loss even of British lives and ships that has taken place. We must all share their concern, for it is indeed impossible to close our eyes to such events or to ignore their effect upon international relations and upon the feelings of the British peo-

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ple. This country desires to be on terms of friendship with every foreign country, whatever its political creed, but the disregard of engagements, the merciless bombing of open towns, the deliberate sinking of British merchant ships—with the best will in the world, how can these things be the foundations upon which true friendship with this country can be laid?

AFTER MUNICH

On the 3rd October 1938 the House debated the outcome of the Munich Conference. On the third day of the Debate Mr. Eden spoke on the following resolution:

"That this House approves the policy of His Majesty's Government by which war was averted in the recent crisis, and supports their efforts to secure lasting peace."

THE Right Honourable Gentleman the Member for Caithness [Sir A. Sinclair] has just given us a characteristic speech, in which he has shrewdly analysed some of the difficulties of the present international situation, and has courteously criticized some of the views of the Government and has given them advice. During the last three months it has been my privilege to listen in silence to many debates upon foreign affairs. I confess that I enjoyed the dumb rôle; it is at once less responsible and less exacting; but it seemed to me this afternoon that this was an occasion upon which it was the duty of any of us who had interested ourselves in the conduct of foreign affairs to speak to this House and to the nation, to express his conviction and, for what it may be worth, to offer suggestions for the future. At the outset of this debate the House heard a remarkable speech from my Right Honourable Friend the Member for the St. George's Division of Westminster [Mr. Cooper]. Whatever our views may be, there cannot have been one of us who was not impressed by the manifest sincerity of that speech. One can imagine the force of the conviction, how strong it must have been, to compel my Right Honourable Friend to take such a step at such a time, for quite obviously there

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could be no moment more painful to him, for personal and political reasons, than the one he had to choose. I feel sure that Members in all parts of the House will have wished to pay tribute to his courage. I, for my part, feel privileged to be allowed to do so.

When the House adjourned at the end of last summer and we went for our holidays, and some less fortunate Ministers continued their labours without the sitting of Parliament, there must have been many Members in all parts of the House who felt unable to share the optimism which was forecast to us for the immediate future of the international situation. There must have been many of us who thought the omens were inauspicious and who feared that long before the appointed date you, Mr. Speaker, would summon us back to this Assembly. Unfortunately, that has proved to be true. Each one of us, wherever he sits in the House, has felt the strain of the last few months, and during August and September saw clearly the clouds gather; but whatever the strain may have been on any private Member of this House, it was insignificant by comparison with the strain that rested upon those who bore the major burden of responsibility, and in particular upon my Right Honourable Friend the Prime Minister himself. We all owe him, and every citizen owes him, a measureless debt of gratitude for the sincerity and pertinacity which he has devoted in the final phase of the crisis to averting the supreme calamity of war. I was glad to hear my Right Honourable Friend pay a tribute to the Foreign Secretary. I have a natural sympathy for Foreign Secretaries and I can imagine something of the burden which must have been his of the day-to-day problems, of which the world sometimes hears nothing at

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all. I feel sure that the noble Lord is richly deserving of that tribute.

Now for the moment we can breathe again, and it is the duty of each one of us to devote what time we can to stock-taking and to considering how it was that Europe came thus to the very edge of the abyss; to considering what we can do to see to it that such a state of affairs shall never occur again. As I say, this is a time for stocktaking; it may also seem to some of us, as I confess it seems to me, to be a respite during which a great national effort is called for by our people. There is throughout the world at this time an immense sense of relief and thankfulness that war has been averted. Perhaps the most striking and most encouraging event of all during these recent weeks was the warmth of the spontaneous reception accorded in Germany to the Prime Minister. It was clearly a manifestation of the deep desire of the German people for peace. Nobody in this House has ever doubted that desire, but the fact that it has at last found expression may be a real signpost on the road to peace. Nor should we overlook the significance of those moral forces which in the last few days were gathering themselves to resist the march to war. No man could be altogether impervious to forces so imponderable, yet so compelling. President Roosevelt gave ample expression to those moral forces in the Notes which came from him. The first part of our lesson is surely that if the peoples of the world could speak to each other freely across the frontiers there would be no risk of war whatever; but that is not the position with which we have to deal.

The influences which finally contributed to averting war were many. It is probably too soon to attempt to analyse them, but one of them was certainly the Prime Minister's

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refusal to give up hope. Another was the efforts of President Roosevelt. A third was that genuine desire for peace among all peoples, German and Italian as well as French and British. A further one to which I would like to make special reference was the appearance in the Press of this country on Tuesday last of this statement:

“It was authoritatively stated in London last night that should Germany, in spite of all efforts made by the British Prime Minister, attack Czechoslovakia, France would be compelled immediately to go to the Czechs’ assistance and Britain and Russia would certainly stand by France.”

I believe that the historian of the future will give that statement an important place among the deterrents to war a week ago. Finally, there was the mobilization of the British Fleet, with all that that portends. I must say that I agreed with my Right Honourable Friend when he stated in his speech that he wished some such step could have been taken at an earlier date; not necessarily the mobilization of the Fleet in its entirety, but some visible action which would convince those who are more impressed by what they see than by what they hear, of the real earnestness of purpose of the British Fleet. In that, my Right Honourable Friend was right.

As I have said, it is too early to assess all those influences, but there is one to which the greatest tribute of all must be paid, and without which we could not hope to be at peace now: that has been the conduct of the Czechoslovak Government. In the practice of self-discipline we have been set a remarkable example by this brave people. Whatever may be the mistakes of the past—and I think we should not be too ready to condemn, for in our conduct in past years, even with minorities, our attitude has not perhaps been all

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that it might have been—nothing could have surpassed the calm dignity and steadfast courage of President Beneš and the Czechoslovak nation. The strain to which they have been subjected has been harsh and continuous, yet they never once failed to appreciate the wider European issues involved. In view of the conditions imposed upon them they might well have expressed a blind bitterness, but at all times they have contributed to the European situation, and have shown by their conduct not only that they are a nation worthy of independence, but that they have laid all Europe under an obligation to them by having made the greatest contribution to the preservation of peace.

Now let me say a word about the negotiations themselves. His Majesty's Government and the French Government—and in this matter the French Government bear equal responsibility with ourselves—took certain decisions in the face of the German Chancellor's demands and decided to sponsor certain proposals for the solution of the Sudeten-German problem. My Right Honourable Friend explained to us this afternoon his difficulties in sponsoring those proposals. Frankly, I am not surprised. I do not suppose that any Member of the Government Bench could have felt any enthusiasm for such proposals, but whatever any Member of the House may think of them now, the fact remains that they have been accepted not only by all the Powers concerned, but by the Czech Government, and are now actually in operation. It does not seem to me that it is so important to consider whether we should praise or blame those proposals as it is to examine what the conditions were that caused the British Government to press such proposals on a friendly nation, and to consider once more what steps we

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are to take now to see that we do not have to play so unpleasing a rôle again.

I do not propose to deal at length with the European situation and with the deterioration that it must be evident to all has taken place, as there will be other opportunities, no doubt, to do so. There are one or two observations which I would like to make about the Sudeten-German problem, and I venture to make them only because at the Foreign Office I was naturally concerned with the problem myself at one time.

The Sudeten Germans have had a grievance. Let there be no doubt whatever about that, but it is a grievance of discrimination, even of severe discrimination, if you will, rather than a grievance of oppression. That is made abundantly clear in Lord Runciman's own letter printed in the White Paper. As a minority they suffered in the post-War years, but where is the minority in Central or Eastern Europe that has not had cause to complain? It is very important that we should be fair in this matter. I say that no German minority anywhere else, in Central or Eastern Europe, is enjoying today privileges equal to those which the Sudeten Germans have had. I want to give the House one example. Last winter a minorities treaty was negotiated between Poland and Germany, and it was acclaimed and rightly acclaimed by the Press of both countries. Well, the terms of that Treaty offered the German minority in Poland rights less than those which the Sudeten Germans have always enjoyed.

In the light of those things, might not the Czech Government sometimes feel that in the last few months it has always been they who have been asked to make all the concessions and that their attitude has received rather scant

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recognition? Moreover, is there anyone in this House who would deny that the grievances of the Sudeten Germans, substantial as they were, were not in a fair way to being resolved? Lord Runciman, whose efforts in this difficult time and whose services are beyond all praise—for he did a truly wonderful piece of work under the greatest of difficulties—had virtually reached an agreement. The plan which he put forward, or which, under advice from him, Dr. Beneš put forward, and known as the Fourth Plan, was a marked advance on any of its predecessors. It would have given the Sudeten Germans the position of a privileged minority in all Europe. That plan was not wrecked from within, it was vetoed from without. The Anglo-French proposals, whatever else we may think of them, offered more than full satisfaction to the claims of the Sudeten Germans. Those proposals contained still further concessions. No one, I suppose, would wish to contend that those proposals are just. War has been averted, for which the world is immeasurably grateful; but let it be remembered that war has been averted, not at our expense or that of any other great Power, but at the cost of grave injustice to a small and friendly nation. Czechoslovakia was not even heard in her own defence.

All territories with even a bare majority of Sudeten Germans are to be transferred to the rule of the present German régime. But are we certain that these people wish to be so transferred? We can have no such assurance. The population in large parts of those areas are not to be consulted. Let the House consider for a moment the elements that make up the Sudeten Germans. There are the Social Democrats, there are the Jews, and there are other sections. Did the House notice the deputation from some of the most famous Bohemian families that called on M. Beneš a short

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while ago to assure him of their loyalty to the Czechoslovak State? These matters are significant, and there can be no doubt that among the Sudeten Germans there is a very considerable minority that does not desire union with the Reich. Therefore, I think we must all reluctantly admit that the Munich proposals, whatever else they may be, are not self-determination. Yet they have been accepted by the Czech Government—accepted under strong pressure. There can be few of us who, whatever our sense of relief, did not feel also a sense of humiliation when we read those proposals. Surely—and here I would address an appeal to the Government if I might—the time allotted to these proposals is cruelly short. Imagine the position of a Czech Sudeten German or a Jew in any one of these four areas, or in the fifth area, the boundaries of which are at present still unknown. Today is the 3rd October. The last date by which they have to get out is the 10th, and no one yet knows the boundaries. Imagine the position. I think I am right—

THE PRIME MINISTER: I think that, if I understood my Right Honourable Friend correctly, he has not fully understood. There is no insistence that persons who wish to opt out of the territory must get out by 10th October. [*Interruption.*] Surely, my Right Honourable Friend and I may be allowed to understand one another. I understood my Right Honourable Friend to be under the impression that everyone who wanted to get out had to get out by 10th October. That is not the position. The position is that the Czech forces—the soldiers and police—have to be out by the 10th, but the inhabitants' power to opt remains beyond the 10th.

MR. EDEN: There is no misunderstanding at all. I fully understood that the power to opt continues. I was trying

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to put myself in the position of a German Jew or a German Social Democrat in those areas, knowing that by the 10th German troops would enter. Even though there might remain with me a power to opt later, I feel that I would rather make assurance doubly sure. That was all that I meant by saying that the time was cruelly short. I do not believe, though I fully appreciate the sincerity and, if you like, the value of this power to opt, that any of these unhappy people would be prepared to run that risk. I believe—the Government know much better than I do—that what is happening today is something like a panic flight of these unhappy people from a rule which they dread. I do not know whether it would yet be possible to extend a little longer at least the last period in respect of the area which has not been delimited. I know we all appreciate the immense difficulty under which these arrangements were negotiated, and that must be the explanation why certain matters seem to have been neglected.

I was very glad to hear what my Right Honourable Friend said earlier this afternoon about the loan to Czechoslovakia. I am certain that the whole House will support the Government in that decision, and I do not think we ought to be the only one, either, to make that offer. It is not only a question of a loan for reconstruction; there is also the problem of compensation. Are any of these unfortunate people to receive any compensation when they have been faced with the alternative of losing their livelihood or, as they think, imperilling their lives? Is the Czech Government to receive any compensation for the public services it has to leave behind. Surely, there ought to be reciprocity in these Munich proposals. The Czechoslovak Government have accepted the proposal to release any Sudeten Germans at pres-

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sent imprisoned in their territory, but what of the Czechs imprisoned in Germany? We read in the *Daily Telegraph* this morning that there are 800 of them. Are not they to enjoy equal rights of release? Certainly I think the House will feel that they should.

I should be glad if whoever is speaking for the Government at the close of this debate can give us any information about the position of the Czechoslovak State Debt. The House will perhaps recall that that State had a loan in London and elsewhere which bears a very high rate of interest. Czechoslovakia has never defaulted—a very remarkable behaviour anywhere in these times, and, I think, quite unique in Central or Eastern Europe. Is Germany going to bear a part of this burden of debt in respect of the large areas of Czechoslovakia which she is going to absorb; or is the truncated State supposed to bear the whole burden? There is no doubt as to what in justice the arrangement should be.

I have tried, as the House has in the short time available, to study the White Paper which has been issued to us. My Right Honourable Friend maintained, and, I thought, maintained with success, that there was definitely some modification in these Munich proposals as compared with those which had been given to him with what we might call the second ultimatum. But it is extremely difficult for anyone not conversant with the details to pass judgement. I suggest that the maps in the White Paper are in themselves somewhat deceptive—inevitably deceptive, but I think a word of caution should perhaps be uttered. If we compare the two maps, the House will be struck by the very much smaller area of the Munich map as compared with the Godesberg map. But, of course, the Munich map, again through no fault of the Government, does not contain the fifth area,

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which is to be occupied before 10th October; nor does the second map contain the plebiscite areas, because they have yet to be defined. In consequence, one is bound to some extent, and I am sure my Right Honourable Friend will take no objection to this, to reserve judgement as to these proposals in detail until we see how they work out from the reports of the Commissions concerned.

It is impossible for anyone who has studied these matters in the past, and I feel sure the Prime Minister must share this feeling himself, not to feel grave anxiety for the future of this State when we look at these strangely contoured concessions. Is its economic life possible, is its continued political existence possible, in this reduced, and in this still unknown reduced, form? That is why I cannot but feel considerable anxiety about our guarantee. Under such conditions it must have specially grave significance. Let no one have a doubt as to the importance of this departure from our traditional policy. We have never done such a thing before, I think, in all our history, as guarantee frontiers, and in this case frontiers that do not exist. My anxiety is this, and I would like some information on the point. The Prime Minister hoped that the guarantee would be effective in steadying the situation. Only twenty-four hours after the Munich proposals, another Power issued another ultimatum, and another concession was made. The question is, when does that guarantee come into operation? Is it the case that it does not come into operation before all the frontiers are finally delimited; or does it come into operation now? It is important that we should know, so that the country may be aware what its responsibility is. I should have thought that on moral grounds at least the guarantee had to come into

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force from the moment when the Czechoslovak State accepted the proposals pressed upon it.

I have voiced some of my anxieties in respect of these Munich proposals. I do not suppose for a moment that they have not occurred to other Members of the House, and are not in the mind of the Government. Yet the Czechoslovak State has accepted these proposals, drastic as they are, and has thereby given evidence of its desire for peace, to the extent even of imperilling its national security. What becomes of the language we have heard so often that the existence of Czechoslovakia was a menace to her neighbours? If the only potential aggressor in Europe was the Czechoslovak State, we could indeed go about our business with a light heart.

One other matter in connection with the negotiations. The Munich proposals were the outcome of a meeting of four of the Great Powers of Europe. It is natural, in those conditions, that there should be many who conjecture as to whether a Four-Power Pact, known to be dear to the heart of at least one of those at Munich last week, is to become also the policy of the British Government. I do not press for an answer if it be inconvenient to give it now, but I would like to enter my own prayer that that may not become our policy at this time and in these conditions. My Right Honourable Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer will perhaps recall that this is not a new proposal, and that when he was Foreign Secretary there were very good reasons why we could not support the suggestion. Briefly, I think that today those reasons are twofold. There is no sufficient cause for seeking to organize Europe on a basis that excludes any great Power, nor do I believe you can secure the lasting peace of Europe on such a basis. Furthermore,

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it should always be the endeavour of British foreign policy to secure the co-operation of the smaller Powers of Europe: those Powers that are almost always on the side of peace—in fact the only time when they are not is when great Powers are stirring them up, as they were doing in the Balkans before 1914. Therefore, my plea would be that the Government should not embark on a policy that leads to a Four-Power Pact, and should remember that no Council of Europe would be complete without the participation of all Powers, great and small.

It must have been evident to the House from the course of these discussions that there is a broad division of outlook at this time. There is a difference of view as to whether the events of the last few days do constitute the beginning of better things, as my Right Honourable Friend hopes, or whether they only give us a breathing space, perhaps of six months or less, before the next crisis is upon us. I should very much like to take the more optimistic view, but this year we have had many optimistic forecasts and they have all been falsified. But whichever view any Member of this House takes, there is surely no excuse for our failing to take every precaution in our power, in every sphere of national defence and of national life. Surely no honourable Member will dispute this. Not one of us ever wants to find himself in this position again. To put it bluntly, the democracies have to show themselves as resolute in policy and spirit as nations under any other form of government.

This is not perhaps the moment at which to put forward detailed proposals, but three conclusions from recent events seem to me to be quite inescapable. The first is that the speed of our rearmament has been, and is, too slow. It should be accelerated by every means in our power. The

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second is that the scope and character of our rearmament needs re-examination in the light of the events of the last few weeks. And the third is that the nation on its civil side should be encouraged so to organize itself as to enable it to meet any future challenge in conditions fairer to our own people than those that exist today.

Surely the House will be agreed that foreign affairs cannot indefinitely be continued on the basis of "stand and deliver!" Successive surrenders bring only successive humiliation, and they, in their turn, more humiliating demands. We have lately—let there be no doubt about it—run into grave dangers. However the immediate issues have been resolved, no Member of this House can doubt the menacing dangers that must confront us for some time. These cannot be conjured by words of goodwill; they cannot be met even by negotiations, however sincerely meant and well pursued. If they are to be met and overcome it can only be by a revival of our national spirit, by a determined effort to conduct a foreign policy upon which the nation can unite—I am convinced that such a policy can be found—and by a national effort in the sphere of defence very much greater than anything that has been attempted hitherto. If there ever were a time for a call for a united effort by a united nation, it is my conviction that that time is now. If such an effort were made I believe we could not only save peace for this month and the next, but save it for our generation.

RATIFICATION OF THE ANGLO- ITALIAN AGREEMENT

The formal conversations between the British and Italian Governments ended with the signature in Rome on 16th April 1938 of the Anglo-Italian Agreement. Ratification of that Agreement was, however, postponed in accordance with the terms of the note communicated by Lord Perth to Count Ciano at the time of the signature.

"In this connection I hardly need to remind Your Excellency that His Majesty's Government regard a settlement of the Spanish question as a prerequisite of the entry into force of the Agreement between our two Governments."

At the end of October His Majesty's Government considered that such a settlement had been reached, and on the 2nd November Mr. Eden took part in the debate when the House was asked to approve the ratification of the Anglo-Italian Agreement on a Motion by the Prime Minister "That this House welcomes the intention of His Majesty's Government to bring the Anglo-Italian Agreement into force."

THE honourable Member for North Cumberland [Mr. W. Roberts] has devoted, as I have reason to know, much care and attention to this Spanish problem, and I think that all of us, in whichever part of the House we may sit, and whatever our views on this long-drawn-out and painful ordeal, would pay tribute to him for the sincerity and earnestness with which he has endeavoured to probe the subject. This afternoon he has addressed to my honourable Friend the Under-Secretary a number of questions. The

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House will perhaps forgive me if I do not follow the honourable Member for North Cumberland into the more detailed aspects of this problem, important and, indeed, often baffling though they be. My purpose is somewhat different.

I believe that the dominant desire of many Members in all parts of the House at this time must be to contribute everything that lies in their power to avoid acrimonious debate. We must all of us be deeply conscious of the gravity of the times in which we live, and of the ever-increasing anxieties which beset the British Commonwealth in all parts of the world. But, since this Motion is before the House, I think honourable Members will appreciate that, in view of my own special connection with this Spanish issue, it must be impossible for me to remain silent. Were I to do so, it might seem to indicate that I had changed my mind, and that is not so. Indeed, it is my conviction that, had it been possible for His Majesty's Government to adopt a firmer attitude in respect of these Spanish problems in the early part of this year, the subsequent deterioration of the international situation which we all lament would not have taken place. Of course, I am conscious that that must be entirely a matter of opinion, and, now that the House is asked to approve the conclusion that has in fact been reached to these prolonged negotiations, there are one or two observations that I would like to make.

I would first ask the House to think back with me for a moment to the early days of this Spanish conflict, and in that connection I may perhaps be permitted one word of personal explanation. There is no Member of this House, in whatever quarter he may sit, who has a greater personal responsibility for the policy of non-intervention than I have. The crisis arose in the early days of the Recess of more than

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two years ago, and the main responsibility for the endorsement of that policy on behalf of His Majesty's Government was that of the Foreign Secretary of the day. I must make it plain that I do not regret the decision which the Government then took. On the contrary, I believe that the Anglo-French initiative which was then taken was intended to avert, and did in fact avert, the imminent danger of a European conflict. For that action I have no apology to offer, and that is where I differ from honourable Members opposite. But, having endorsed the policy of non-intervention, it was clearly my duty to do everything in my power to see it decently carried out, and that was a very difficult task. We persevered as best we might, despite numerous disappointments, of which my Right Honourable Friends on the Front Bench are as well aware as I am.

It was because of this country's special responsibility in respect of the non-intervention policy that it seemed to me imperative that, before opening negotiations with another Mediterranean Power, specially interested in the Spanish problem, for a new agreement, we should make sure that we both spoke the same language, that we both meant the same thing by our adherence to a policy of non-intervention. Long before those conversations opened in Rome, it was clear that this was not so. We meant, and still mean—this country means—by non-intervention, leaving it to Spaniards to settle their own destiny. Other Powers, however, had made it plain by their action that they did not intend to allow the signature of the Non-Intervention Agreement to stand in the way of any military action they might consider necessary to ensure the victory of the party which they championed. In other words, the Italian Government and ourselves were speaking entirely different languages about Spain.

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It seemed to me essential to clear up this situation, otherwise Italian intervention in Spain would proceed parallel with our negotiations. This seemed to me an intolerable situation. I did not see how it was possible to conclude an agreement with another Power while the forces of that Power were intervening in a civil conflict in a friendly State contrary to the express undertaking which they had signed, and while their aeroplanes were bombing towns in that State and sinking ships engaged in carrying on a trade which they themselves had expressly agreed to be perfectly legitimate.

Those were my apprehensions, and those apprehensions were, unhappily, justified by the event. Despite the opening of negotiations with this country, Italian intervention in the Spanish conflict continued unchecked. About six weeks or less afterwards, an offensive was opened in Northern Spain by General Franco—a successful offensive—with the help of his German and Italian allies. I would only quote how *The Times* correspondent described that offensive, and the retreat of the Government troops which took place. *The Times* correspondent said:

“The difficult manœuvre of withdrawing in the face of the enemy proved too severe a test”—that is to say, for the Government troops—“Under the terrible punishment meted out by newly arrived German and Italian air units, the temptation of troops, once on the move, to continue rather than to stop, was irresistible. Two Italian motorized divisions poured into the breach.”

All through the summer this intervention continued. Not only did German and Italian aeroplanes keep up a continuous bombardment of the Spanish Government lines, but a not unsuccessful attempt was made to establish by air a

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new development in warfare—to establish by air a blockade of the Spanish Government ports. In that process British shipping, with other shipping, suffered severely. Then I may quote *The Times* correspondent in Rome—because I am anxious to keep to absolute purity. *The Times* correspondent in Rome said:

“More and more prominence is being given in the newspapers to the part played by Italian air squadrons in this blockade.”

This intense aerial activity had its effect; the Spanish Government line bent, and broke. General Franco's forces reached the sea, thus dividing the two sections of the Government forces, one half from the other, and there were many who thought, indeed, that the war had come to an end in General Franco's victory. Perhaps I might give the House one personal experience. Towards the end of the summer I was visited by an Englishman who holds no kind of official position, but who has had rather exceptional opportunities of viewing the actual course of the operations in Spain; and I asked him, as anyone would, what he thought would be the outcome of the conflict. He said to me: “I believe that in the end the Government will be beaten, and they will be beaten, not by General Franco's land forces, but by his overwhelming air power.”

He went on to say—and this, I think, has some interest for any of us who have ever tried to follow military operations:

“It is not the bombing of towns—Barcelona or Valencia—of which you read in the newspapers every day, that has this effect. It is the continuous bombardment, day and night, of the lines of communication, with the result that the troops

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can get in the line neither rest, nor sleep, nor food, nor relief."

Some of us may perhaps remember, especially in the last months of the War, the effect of air power—sometimes the bombing of roads close behind the line, catching a battalion either coming up to relieve or going back. Anything we knew then was but child's play to what the Spanish Government troops have had to endure in this respect for months past. I only mention this because we must ask ourselves the question, in all fairness: Whose were the aeroplanes which played so essential a rôle in this war? I am not going to indict anybody; I only want to allow the official Italian accounts to bear witness for themselves. Here is a Reuter's message from Rome, dated 8th August:

"Striking claims on behalf of the Italian volunteer air forces in Spain are made in an official communiqué published here today under a Saragossa date-line. Dealing with the part played by the Italian aviation section in General Franco's counter-attack on the Lower Ebro, the communiqué makes the following reference to the period from 25th July to 5th August"—Just ten days, I ask the House to note—"The losses inflicted on the enemy by the Volunteer Air Force have been very heavy. The contribution of the Italian volunteers was as follows:—158 bombing actions took place with the use of 541 aircraft and the dropping of 455,000 kilograms [about 450 tons] of explosives. Intense action was carried out by pursuit craft, both accompanying bombing squadrons and in reconnaissance flights. Thirteen flights were made accompanying bombers, with a total participation"—this is a figure which I ask the House to note—"of 327 aircraft, and 13 reconnaissance flights, with a total use

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of 352 machines. In all, the Legionaires carried out 1,672 flights, with a total flying time of 2,825 hours."

The presence of each and all of those aeroplanes was a direct violation of the Non-Intervention Pact. The plain unvarnished facts would seem to me to be quite inescapable. May I ask the House to contemplate for one moment the situation with which we are now faced? In these days we are told that we must be realistic. I accept that. I take that to mean that we must not shirk facts, however unpleasant and embarrassing they may be. What is the main fact? It is surely this, that when His Majesty's Government put its name to the Anglo-Italian Agreement it made an essential condition, and if I may say so, correctly made that condition. Here it is. It is in the Note from Lord Perth to Count Ciano published in White Paper No. 11:

"In this connection I hardly need to remind Your Excellency that His Majesty's Government regard a settlement of the Spanish question as a prerequisite of the entry into force of the Agreement between our two Governments."

I would ask the House for a moment to consider how far that very reasonable condition has been satisfied. First of all, what does a settlement in Spain mean? It has never been clearly defined—I make no complaint about that—but I take it that to most honourable Members a settlement in Spain means either that the Spanish civil war has come to an end—best of all—or, at least, that foreign intervention in the struggle must have ceased. That is certainly what I thought the phrase meant. But can either of these results now be said to have been achieved? The civil war has certainly not come to an end. It is, unhappily, raging at this moment with undiminished violence. And what of foreign intervention—and particularly, in connection with this Agreement,

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of Italian intervention? Has that ceased, or has it even been effectively limited? It is surely difficult to maintain that view.

We have been told—it has been published to the world—that 10,000 Italian infantrymen have been withdrawn and everyone has welcomed that. But the main contribution of Italy to the cause of the Salamanca authorities has never been in infantry, but in technicians and armaments, and particularly aeroplanes. There has never, so far as I am aware, been any withdrawal of these. This seems all the more important now, seeing that the aeroplane is, if I am not mistaken, going to play an ever more important rôle in the Spanish conflict in the coming winter months. So far as I can judge, there is little likelihood now of a military decision—in the sense of the fighting forces on land—at any rate, in the immediate future; and the main efforts of General Franco will be concentrated on starving out his opponents during the winter months by establishing an effective air blockade. For this he must be largely dependent on his Italian allies. As long as Italy has her air legions in Spain, it cannot be reasonably claimed that there has been any effective limitation of her intervention in the war. And what is happening now? I will inflict my very last quotation on the House. It is also from a respectable authority—this time the *Daily Telegraph*, of only yesterday morning. The correspondent writes:

“The new offensive was launched after two weeks of calm, during which the insurgent forces at the front were changed and the artillery and air force reorganized. The Italian and German air squadrons were used in greater numbers than in any other offensive yet made and the Government’s posi-

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tions were bombed without ceasing during the daylight hours of yesterday."

In fact, surely, the honest truth is that the essential condition which we laid down—which the Government laid down—for the bringing into force of our Agreement with Italy has not been satisfied: we have waived it; and, whether that be right or wrong, nothing is going to disguise that fact from the world. What conclusion will the world draw? They know that we have embarked on a policy of appeasement. The object is, and rightly, to eliminate possible causes of war in a spirit of mutual collaboration and goodwill. But this can be carried out only if all concerned are willing to subordinate purely national interests for the common good. This country has been ready to do this—ready to do it for a long time past. The Government have been ready to make, and have made, very far-reaching concessions in their sincere desire to improve the general atmosphere: but up to now there seems to me to have been little sign of a similar spirit from certain other States concerned. We are constantly giving, and they are constantly taking. I am reminded of the charity collectors in *The Hunting of the Snark*—they collect, but they do not subscribe. I am driven reluctantly to think that there is a real danger that if the policy of appeasement continues to be interpreted in different ways by different countries, many international problems will, it is true, have been eliminated in a sense satisfactory to others, but our position and interests may become gravely imperilled. We shall be faced, I fear, by a bigger international problem than ever before, and I gravely doubt whether we shall receive any assistance in seeking to solve it.

Take the problem presented by the present Agreement. There were two main contributions to be made by the two

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countries concerned—both unpleasant for those who were to make them. We had to recognize the annexation of Abyssinia; Italy had to withdraw from Spain. No doubt for both there would have been a bitter pill, but for each of us it might have been argued that the gains balanced the concessions involved. We must recognize the right of Italy to annex Abyssinia, but Italy continues to intervene in Spain. I cannot believe that this was what the House contemplated when it approved this Agreement. I hold no special brief for either party in Spain—frankly, I had too much to do with both—and, like most honourable Members of this House, I would cordially welcome an improvement in relations between this country and Italy; but I cannot believe that to bring the Agreement into force on such conditions as these is in the real interest of our own country, and, although I freely recognize the sincerity of the Government's motives, they will, I am sure, equally recognize my own sincerity when I say that, just as last February I could not endorse this policy in the House, so, most reluctantly, tonight I cannot go into the Lobby in its support.

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Mr. Eden spoke in the Debate on the Address in the House of Commons on 10th November 1938.

MY Right Honourable Friend the Secretary of State for Air has given us a long account of his administration, and I do not propose to detain the House by commenting upon that statement tonight. There are many honourable Members in all parts of the House who wish to speak upon that issue, and for that reason I will make my own statement as brief as I possibly can. This is, perhaps, almost the only occasion in the whole year, the Debate on the King's Speech, when Members of this House have an opportunity to review the state of the nation, and I should like to detain honourable Members for a few minutes tonight on that subject. If I trespass at times outside the rigid confines of Defence, the House will, I am sure, appreciate the reason.

We should, I am convinced, make a grave mistake if we were to belittle the very great dangers of the present time. Let me tell the House frankly why I believe those dangers to be very great. For a century and more we in this country have relied upon one of two methods of keeping the peace and, by keeping the peace, preserving the liberties and the security of our own people. We have relied either on the balance of power or the collective system. Each of those methods has had its advocates. I am not disposed to discuss either of those methods tonight, for the simple reason that they have both gone. I imagine that neither the one nor

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the other exists today. We have quite a different state of affairs confronting us. What is it? In diverse parts of the world great States, in the Far East as in Europe, are organized and maintained today on a war-time basis. On occasion one, at least, of these Powers has shown that it is not even afraid to use the threat of general war in order to get its own way.

We are confronted by another phenomenon in present-day Europe to which I would draw the attention of the House, and that is the general collapse of liberty. In this country we believe in self-government by a free people. That has been our faith for generations and we can never yield it up, for it is the source of our whole vitality and strength as a nation. We had hoped, and it formed part of the announced war aims of the time, to see that faith shared by other nations, not because we wanted to impose our ways upon them, of course not, but because liberty seemed to us to be the foundation of good understanding between nations, and because when all nations enjoy freedom, the world will enjoy lasting peace. Therefore, to take note of and to deplore this loss of liberty is not to show ideological prejudice but to recognize the state of affairs that confronts us in a world where statesmen are prepared to use the threat of war as an instrument of national policy, and to glorify that instrument.

The truth is that democracy, as we understand it, has to meet a new challenge in every field. It has to be met in commerce and in other conditions of life no less than in foreign policy and in armaments. We in this country are still far from appreciating the strength of that challenge and the manner in which it is going to affect the daily lives of our people. Combined with the advent of the bomber, this

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challenge is going to transfigure the whole character and face of England as we know it. I have tried to find a parallel in history, and the nearest that I can find is the contrast between the state of Western Europe when the Roman Empire was at its height of power, when peace prevailed, when countries were ordered and cities in the main open and at peace, and the last years of the Roman Empire, when authority had broken down and life consisted in a large measure of taking refuge in fortified cities. Fortified towns are going to be our rule now, until the bomber is tamed or until civilization, as we know it, is destroyed.

It is not perhaps surprising that in such conditions some people should say we cannot, faced with that kind of challenge, maintain our own liberties and our own methods of life. I do not myself take that view in respect of our liberties, but if we are to meet this challenge, we have to achieve an enormous voluntary effort, comparable in its scope and in its intensity with what other nations are able to do by compulsory means. This will call for a measure of self-surrender by every citizen. It will call, certainly from the wealthier classes, for some measures of sacrifice of present standards of life. It has done that in several ways already. It will call for a reorganization and, above all, a speeding-up in the working of the democratic machine. The time factor is all-important in the modern world, and the democracies by comparison are painfully slow. It will mean, in short, something in the nature of a revolution in our national life. It can be done. No effort of which any other country is capable is beyond the power of our own people. But let us make no mistake. Unless such an effort is made there is no future for the British people and the things they stand for in this world except a progressive weakening of their authority and a slow

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sliding down the slope. Britain is a first-class Power or nothing. With her area, with her population, she literally cannot live as a second- or a third-class Power.

Let me, with that background in mind, ask the House to turn to some of our main problems. I take first the question of Defence, to which my Right Honourable Friend made his notable contribution today. We have spent a great deal of money and effort on Defence, but the fact remains, which we all accept, that we are not at present rearming at a speed or on a scale comparable, allowing for our resources and our commitments, with certain other States. I agree with my Right Honourable Friend, I do not want to make invidious comparisons, but I do not think that is necessary, because to me the question seems to be this. It is not rearming in the fact of one Power or in rivalry with one Power. It is a question of rearming to fulfil our commitments as a nation and as an Empire in a world where a number of countries are permanently on a war-time basis. That, of course, is the real difficulty, that we are still on a peace-time basis while these countries are on a war-time basis. It seems to me that the Secretary of State for War made an absolutely fair and just comment on the situation in his speech at Govan, where he said:

“It must be recognized that, under our present system, nothing can guarantee appreciable acceleration of the arms programme, nor can there be an appreciable enlargement of it in the given time.”

Of course, he is quite right. That is an unchallengeable statement. But what is the lesson of all this? It is, surely, that we must either employ new methods or submit to permanent inferiority in armaments, with all that that means. The difference, as I see it, between ourselves and certain

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other States is not only that in armaments we are organized on a peace-time and they on a war-time basis; it applies also to speech and thought. We are still thinking in political terms whereas they are thinking militarily. Only if your armaments are commensurate with your needs has your diplomacy a fair chance. The knowledge that we are comparatively weak almost inevitably affects policy. It affects our attitude to other countries, and it affects, in the world as you have it today, their attitude towards us. Hatred of war is good. It is sane and it is healthy. But fear of war is not so good, for fear of war paralyses the will, and no policy that is based upon fear, no policy which makes an appeal to fear, can be a policy that this country should follow.

A no less important aspect of Defence is the condition of the people. I have noticed it said in the Press and in every by-election lately that the issue today is foreign policy. I wonder whether that is right? I wonder whether the question is not a little different; whether the main issue should not be the building of a better and stronger Britain, which alone can make a stronger foreign policy? The present leaders in Germany and Italy owe the extraordinary position that they have achieved in their own countries in the main to the conviction which they have given to their own peoples that their first care is the well-being of their own peoples. They began with the work of internal reconstruction. They tackled first the question of unemployment. Foreign policy came later. So it seems to me that in this country we have two tasks of overwhelming importance, the security and well-being of our people, the strengthening of our home defences, and the creation of a condition of life that is tolerable for all, a life that will give work and interest to every

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section of our community. These problems, I believe, are being obscured.

There is much talk of the issue being between those who want peace and those who want war. There is no such issue. We all want peace. We all want peace which will give us security, and a peace in which we can all be proud of our country and in which we can work for our country. Rearmament is not a matter of arms alone. It affects every sphere of the life of the nation. We have to rearm and to rebuild at one and the same time, and that at top speed. The drive for munitions and the drive for housing must go side by side. Health is man-power and man-power is health. It is no use having the finest armaments in the world unless you have a fit nation to wield them, and we cannot have a fit nation unless we devote as much attention to the provision of housing, nourishment and sunlight as we do to the provision of arms.

Some of these problems are pressing, and the House knows it very well. Is it not a reproach that at a time like this, when we hear of national service and everyone wants to organize the full man-power of the nation, we should have 1,750,000 unemployed? When every conceivable allowance is made for temporary stoppage and so on, the broad fact remains, and that is a terrible indictment. The problem of the Special Areas persists. Many have left those areas but many remain, and the problem is still there, and it is not a problem of the work-shy. There is no such problem, given decent conditions of labour. Other parts of England are almost as bad as these areas. If we are to be strong as a nation we must tackle these weaknesses in the body politic.

There are other problems, too. One has been referred to by the honourable Member for Stafford [Mr. Thorne-

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croft], who made such a very remarkable maiden speech—the question of juvenile unemployment and the very serious problem created by blind-alley occupations. There is also the problem of the low-wage group. A short time ago the Unemployment Assistance Board drew our attention to the fact that if they were to pay what they thought they should pay in relief, the sum given to a married man with a family should be equivalent to the wage that another man may be earning. I know that honourable Members opposite dislike family allowances, none the less it may be a possible solution, and I would ask whether the time is not ripe for an inquiry into this question so that we may all see the facts and the position that that inquiry will reveal, and then express our opinions in the light of the fuller knowledge that we shall then have. By tackling these real problems, which affect the daily life of the nation, we shall be building a stronger Britain.

May I say one word on the question of trade? There, too, are issues which demand national effort. Look at the position in the Far East today. China was the one great potential market left which, if it could be peacefully developed, would have gone far to satisfy the needs of the nations. We know what has happened there. Whatever the outcome of the war, the purchasing power of the Chinese people has obviously been depreciated. Their sufferings have been beyond computation. When hostilities are over, the Western nations are not likely to find themselves as well placed as they were in the beginning. In other parts of the world we have to meet competition based on national lines of a most formidable character such as we have never had before. It is true that there has been much exaggeration as to the effect of that competition up to the present. But it is the future

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we have to consider no less than the present, and there are clear indications that that competition is now beginning to take effect in fields where hitherto our position has been predominant. I think that there, too, there is a call for something in the nature of a national effort. Anyone who is interested in this subject should read a remarkable article which appears in the *Economist* this week. Having stated our needs and the effort which lies ahead, the question which comes continually to my mind is whether under the present party system, as we work it, an effort commensurate with our needs can be made at all. It is surely clear that a much wider national effort is needed, but it is of little use saying this unless we face what it implies. That means trying to get agreement on those subjects in respect of which agreement is essential if sacrifices are to be made and generally accepted by all.

It is no use denying that our chief difficulty in this respect is in foreign policy. There is no difference of aim because we all want peace, it is a difference of method. What is worrying so many of us today is the progressive weakening of the standards of international good faith, standards which it must be to our practical interests as a nation to see strengthened. It is not a question of ideals; it is essentially a practical proposition. It is very well put in a book which has just been published by Captain Liddell Hart, *Through the Fog of War*, in which he says:

“Civilization is built on the practice of keeping promises. It may not sound a high attainment, but if trust in its observance be shaken the whole structure cracks and sinks. Any constructive effort and all human relations, personal, political and commercial, depend on being able to depend on promises.”

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It must be the test of any action which we take whether it tends to strengthen or re-establish international good faith. Can we all meet on that ground? Are we all agreed on that? If so, should we not at least try, for how else can we really make the national effort which is called for. Let me give one example. There have been discussions and motions about national service and a national register. Personally, I say frankly that I cannot see any great value in a voluntary register. Conceivably it might rather add to than decrease the confusion at the outbreak of hostilities. I would go further than a register. I would like to see every citizen of this country given the opportunity for some training in one or other of our vital defence services. These services are not just the Navy, Army and Air Force. They include, of course, air-raid precautions, agriculture and a number of other vital elements. My honourable Friend was quite right when he said that there are large numbers who would wish for such training. I think that that work ought to be done.

But how? That is the problem. How, with the best will in the world, can you realize true national service, how can the greatest voluntary effort be given by the nation unless it is based on real unity, unless it is the outcome of a real demand from all sections of the people and made on behalf of an England which is free and united, an England of equal opportunity for all regardless of class or creed, an England in which comradeship is the spirit of the nation, an England in which men refuse to rest content while poverty continues to be the lot of many? I believe that democracy as we know it has to meet new and vigorous challenges in every field and that we have not yet realized their true significance. This is the issue: Can we adapt our methods so as to meet this challenge, in no spiteful or back-biting spirit, but in a

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determination to uphold those traditions in which we believe, and to win for our people greater security, improved conditions of life and a wider hope for the future? Can we do that, or must we be content to go on living from hand to mouth, as we know we are, wasting our substance without an ordered plan, spending much but achieving little, and reconciling ourselves to a vast army of unemployed?

From time to time in our history our people have had to make major decisions. I believe that now is such a time. There are immense reserves of goodwill waiting to be utilized, but this can never be done on a party basis. My appeal is not merely for a government of all the parties—that is mere machinery. What is far more important is the spirit behind such unity, a determination for a nation-wide endeavour to win for our people not only security of Defence but security of employment in the factory and on the land; not only a will to provide anti-aircraft guns but a will to acknowledge and resolve the problem of the Special Areas; a faith that democracy can achieve these things, and a realization that if it will not try it cannot survive.

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Mr. Eden visited the United States in December 1938, and at the invitation of the National Association of Manufacturers he addressed the Annual Congress of American Industry at the Waldorf-Astoria, New York, on 9th December.

THOUGH in years gone by I have visited Canada, and, indeed, have been fortunate enough to cross that Dominion from Quebec to Vancouver, to view its scenic beauties and witness its industrial life, I have only once before, and that for a few hours at Hawaii, set foot on the soil of the United States. You will note then how much my education has been neglected, and pardon, I hope, my consequent shortcomings.

Before turning to the immediate subject-matter of my speech there is one reference I must make. We are all, I feel sure, glad that a trade agreement has been signed between our two countries. This is neither the time nor the place to discuss its details, but it is all to the good that a step should have been taken which will free and further the flow of commerce in this troubled world. Great credit seems to me to be due, if I may say so, to the two governments, and to the negotiators for the pertinacity with which they have pursued their objective. The outcome must be particularly satisfying to the President and to Mr. Hull, who have, despite all difficulties, for so long maintained their confidence in this policy of trade agreements.

I hope as the outcome of this visit to the United States, all too short, unfortunately, though it must be, to learn something of your outlook on world affairs. Nothing is

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more stimulating to any mind than to view an old problem from a new angle, and so I have come to your great country to listen and to learn much more than to speak. Tonight, however, I appreciate that it is my turn to do my part of the bargain. Though, therefore, what I can tell you is much less valuable than what you could teach me, I am asked to speak to you tonight of the problems that confront democracy in this modern world and I must perforce do my best.

In what I say to you I shall seek to put before you what I believe to be the point of view of the average Englishman upon the world problems of today. For though there are differences between us at home, even important differences, as there must be in any free community, yet there are certain fundamentals upon which we are all agreed. I belong, as do so many of you in this room tonight, to the war generation; to a generation which is sometimes referred to in my country as the missing generation. It is a generation which has, quite literally, been decimated. Almost every family has suffered, some have suffered severely, and, as inevitably happens, we have lost our best. Yet perhaps the survivors of that generation have a special right to give their message to the world, to the vigorous combative new world which is taking shape around us at this hour.

What was it that some twenty years ago we and you both fought to achieve? Men spoke of the war to end war and, even if that seemed to some a goal beyond immediate human reach, we did have faith that the power of arrogant militarism would be destroyed, as we hoped, for ever. It was our ambition that the nations should enter upon an era of peaceful relations, when barriers to trade and intercourse between peoples would be broken down; when in the words later embodied in the Kellogg pact—which bears the name of one of

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your own statesmen—the nations of the world would renounce war “as an instrument of national policy.” Tolerance and justice we hoped, not force and greed, would rule.

Twenty years after we can reflect ruefully how remote we are from the goal of our hopes. We could spend a long time discussing how this has come about. The blame does not lie upon one government alone, nor upon one nation alone. But such jobbing backwards is a vain pursuit, nor is there time for it now. The realities that face us demand all our energy, and all our concentration. What are these realities? They are blunt and grim. National animosities have not been exorcized; on the contrary, they appear to have been intensified under the banner of rival ideologies. Nor has the way to peace been made plain. Whatever else the world may now have been made, it has plainly not been made safe for democracy. Other systems of government, deriving authority from a totally different philosophy, throw out their strident challenge.

These seem to us in our own country to be the forces that confront us. These forces, and the events which they have let loose, have affected England very closely, perhaps even more closely than the United States; or, if they have not affected us more closely, they have done so in a different way. Faced with such a challenge, we are acutely conscious of the need to defend ourselves, both materially and spiritually, from the gathering storm, to make sure where we stand, and what it is we stand for, and, having made sure, to stand firm. In any self-examination, if it be honest and thorough, we cannot but be conscious of many defects, of many benefits that we have perhaps taken for granted, of many traditions to which we have been content to pay lip-service, of a

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spiritual capital which we have inherited from our fathers, and to which we have not perhaps added our quota.

That is one side of the picture, and a side to which we must not shut our eyes if self-examination is to serve any useful purpose. A false complacency is the worst calamity that can befall any nation in critical times. To realize, then, the extent of the challenge that confronts us, and to be conscious of our own shortcomings, is not to proclaim that we are faint-hearted, still less to suggest that we are decadent. Let me say this with all emphasis. I am convinced from my own experience of what men and women in Britain are thinking and feeling today that the British people are just the same people as they have been in the greatest moments of their history; that they have the same beliefs, the same conceptions of life and society. The Great War and its aftermath have not shaken the fundamental faiths, nor undermined the qualities of our people. We do still care, deeply, strongly, and for the same things.

It is quite true that we criticize one another sometimes; we have always done so, and I suppose we always shall. In itself this is no unhealthy sign in any free community, but this does not alter the fact that at heart we all want the same things, we all want to preserve our liberties, we all want freedom and security, not only for ourselves, but for our children and for our children's children. We all want peace, however much we may differ as to the method we think best to follow in order to win the common goal. There is a unity of outlook deeper than all the more superficial disunities of expression. What a nation has in common is what matters most. The still waters of community of outlook sometimes run so deep that they are less noticeable than the controversial ripples on the surface, but they matter more.

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It is the essence of democracy that it provides constant schooling in this endless adventure which is the art of government. Democracy is a university in which we learn from one another. It can never be a barracks, where blind obedience is the first essential.

In our university, then, we must be constantly re-examining our political faith, and applying it to the conditions of the modern world. Every political system, be it democratic or autocratic, must continually evolve, and in the last resource the survival of democracy must depend upon the faith which it inspires and the results which, through faith, it can achieve.

We have to make sure that the way we practise democracy is the most likely way, in the changing circumstances of the world, to guarantee the best and freest life for the members of the community to which we belong. Democracy must have the strength of the best tempered steel, not rigid, but supple. It must have the strength of the highest form of discipline—self-discipline. It must have the courage to recognize mistakes and injustices, as well as to stand firm for what is right and what is just. This is a high ideal, but without an ideal man will never give of his best. We have to choose what we believe to be the true ideal, and having chosen it, hold to it, and work for it.

The differences in my country and yours are many and varied; indeed, I am prepared to discover many more such differences in these next few days than I have been conscious of hitherto. Yet, despite them all, our conception of the State in our society is very much the same, and, what is more important, I believe it is the right conception, a just conception, and one that gives the best scope for human progress. I believe, too, that if we are determined that it shall

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survive it will survive, but if we are not so determined it may well perish. The clock of human progress will then be set back, and we shall not be faithful trustees of what we have inherited and we shall leave a legacy of strife and confusion to those who come after us.

I am not going to attempt to define democracy. There are many forms and shades of it in many countries, just as there are many forms and shades of dictatorship. I would therefore concern myself only with what is common to all forms of democracy, and what is the most important aspect of it to those who live under it; what, in fact, we in England and you in America, cherish most.

We and you stand for democracy because we stand for the rights of the individual; because our purpose is to assure freedom for the expression of thought; to encourage conditions in which the individual human personality can live and grow. Man was not, in our view, made for the State. The State was made for man. The art of government consists in striking a just balance between the claims of the individual and those of the State to which he owes allegiance.

We are living through an attempt to persuade man to reverse his faith. After centuries of endeavour, he is threatened by the State he has himself created. Man's purpose in creating that State was to enable him to live in order and security, to guarantee to him the opportunity to exercise his faculties freely.

It would indeed be the greatest irony in human history if mankind were to allow all progress to be stifled by the setting up of a new form of idolatry—the worship of the State, to which all men must bow down, and to which they must sacrifice their freedom of faith, of speech, of worship.

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Yet such is now the doctrine in many lands, and it has passionate and ruthless devotees. "Man," said Pascal, "is an incomprehensible creature."

No believer in democracy could ever accept such a state of affairs.

It is not that we, to whom has been handed down this heritage of freedom, have a false conceit of ourselves. We in Britain know full well that we are no paragons. We acknowledge, of course, that there are many chequered pages in our long history. One of the worst concerns our dealings with you, one hundred and sixty years ago.

Yet admitting all this, we know that there are certain standards in which we believe, and which we will not yield up.

In our conception, a modern democratic State must be based upon racial and religious toleration. Each citizen must enjoy individual liberty, all must be equal before the law. The rights of minorities and majorities alike must be honoured and respected. These beliefs are, we are convinced, the basis of all progress. As an Englishman addressing this great American audience tonight, I tell you that these are the beliefs of our English people still, and that they will hold to them in the years that lie ahead.

Let us then sum up, and in so doing let us seek to look into the future. What do we see? We see a world vigorous and vital, but ruthless and challenging: a world where force is for many the only instrument of policy.

In such conditions we know that we must believe in ourselves to live. We know that we must champion our ideals, and the faiths to which we hold with an equal strength, or others which we abhor will take their place.

We know that this endeavour will once again tax our

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strength and our endurance to the uttermost. For all this in spirit we are preparing. Nor are we calling out for help to others, nor seeking to lure others to pull our chestnuts from the fire. We have no such intention.

We know that we are destined, in our land and in our generation, to live in a period of emergency of which none can see the end. If throughout that testing time, however long or short it be, we hold fast to our faith, cradle it in stone, and set steel to defend it, we can yet hand on our inheritance of freedom intact to the generations that are to come.

APPENDIX

“Text of Proposals” drawn up by the Representatives of Belgium, France, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Italy in London on 19th March 1936 (Cmd. 5134).

THE representatives of Belgium, France, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and of Italy, having met to examine the situation created by the communication addressed to their respective Governments by the German Government on the 7th March 1936,

I

Take note of the draft resolution submitted to the Council of the League of Nations in the name of Belgium and France, by which the fact of the breach by Germany of Article 43 of the Treaty of Versailles has been established with a view to giving notice thereof to the Powers Signatories of the Treaty of Locarno.

They further take note of the support given to this draft resolution by the Governments of the United Kingdom and Italy.

II

Whereas:

(1) Scrupulous respect for all treaty obligations is a fundamental principle of international life and an essential condition of the maintenance of peace;

(2) It is an essential principle of the law of nations that no Power can liberate itself from the engagements of a

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Treaty nor modify the stipulations thereof except with the consent of the other Contracting Parties;

(3) The breach of Article 43 of the Treaty of Versailles and the unilateral action taken by the German Government in violation of the Treaty of Locarno without recourse to the procedure laid down by the Treaty of Locarno for the settlement of disputes conflict with these principles;

Consider that:

(1) By this unilateral action the German Government confers upon itself no legal rights;

(2) This unilateral action by introducing a new disturbing element into the international situation must necessarily appear to be a threat to European security.

III

Declare that nothing that has happened before or since the said breach of the Treaty of Locarno can be considered as having freed the Signatories of that Treaty from any of their obligations or guarantees and that the latter subsist in their entirety.

Undertake forthwith to instruct their General Staffs to enter into contact with a view to arranging the technical conditions in which the obligations which are binding upon them should be carried out in case of unprovoked aggression.

IV

Decide to invite the German Government to lay before the Permanent Court of International Justice at The Hague the argument which it claims to draw from the incompatibility between the Franco-Soviet Pact of Mutual Assistance

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and the Treaty of Locarno, and to undertake to accept as final the decision of the said Court, without prejudice to the operation of paragraph 7 (2) below.

The French Government declares that it has already agreed that the said Court should be seized of the question stated above.

v

Decide in the name of their Governments jointly to invite the German Government to subscribe to the following provisional arrangements, which shall remain valid until the conclusion of the negotiations referred to in paragraph 7 below:

(1) All despatch of troops or war material into the zone defined by Article 42 of the Treaty of Versailles will be immediately suspended; in consequence, the forces stationed there will not exceed.....battalions andbatteries of artillery (insert here the official figures given by the German Government);

(2) The paramilitary forces (S.A., S.S., Labour Corps and other organisations) stationed in the said zone will be strictly maintained as they were before the 7th March 1936; in particular they shall in no case be formed into large units or serve directly or indirectly for the reinforcement of troops;

(3) No works of fortification or preparation of ground-works shall be proceeded with in the said zone. No landing ground will be laid out, equipped or improved there.

The Governments of France and of Belgium undertake similarly to suspend during the period any despatch of troops into the zones adjoining the frontiers between their countries and Germany.

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VI

Decide to take, for the same period, all the necessary measures with a view to:

(1) Create an international force, including detachments from the armies of the guarantor Powers, to be stationed, with the agreement of all the Governments concerned, in a zone contained between the Belgian-German and Franco-German frontiers on one side, and on the other a line situated to the East of the said frontiers and following them at a distance of approximately 20 kilom., this zone being entirely reserved for occupation by the said international force;

(2) Set up an international commission whose duty it shall be to supervise the carrying out of the obligations undertaken by the Powers which have formed the above-mentioned force, as well as by Belgium, France and Germany for the eventual execution of paragraphs V and VI (1) above.

VII

Taking note of the proposals made by Germany in the memorandum communicated to them on the 7th March,

Decide, so far as they are concerned—

To propose to the German Government, if that Government explicitly accepts the invitations addressed to it in pursuance of the preceding paragraphs, that it should take part in negotiations which would be based in particular on the following elements:

(1) Examination of the proposals Nos. 2 to 5 made by Germany in the memorandum of the 7th March;

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- (2) Revision of the status of the Rhineland;
- (3) Drawing up of mutual assistance pacts open to all the signatories of the Treaty of Locarno, and intended to reinforce their security.

So far as concerns the Four Powers represented in London, the reinforcement of their security provided for will include in particular obligations of mutual assistance between Belgium, France, the United Kingdom and Italy, or any of them, with suitable provisions to ensure prompt action by the signatories in case of need as well as technical arrangements for the preparation of such measures as would ensure the effective execution of the obligations undertaken.

Further, the four Powers declare that they have agreed to press in the course of the negotiations for the adoption of provisions intended to prohibit or to limit the subsequent establishment of fortifications in a zone to be determined.

VIII

Considering that the maintenance of peace and the organisation of collective security can only be assured by the respect for treaties and the limitation of armaments; that the re-establishment of economic relations between the nations on a healthy basis is equally necessary to the process of reconstruction,

Declare themselves ready—

To support the introduction at the Council of the League of Nations of resolutions proposing to invite all the nations concerned to an international conference which would in particular examine—

- (1) Agreements organising on a precise and effective basis the system of collective security, and paying atten-

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tion to the definition of the conditions in which Article XVI of the Covenant of the League of Nations should be applied;

(2) Agreements tending to assure the effective limitation of armaments;

(3) International arrangements having as their object the extension of economic relations and the organisation of commerce between the nations;

(4) The proposals 6 and 7 made by the German Government in their memorandum of the 7th March, as well as the suggestions made subsequently in regard to Austria and Czechoslovakia.

IX

Recalling that, under Article 7 of the Treaty of Locarno, the obligations devolving upon their respective Governments do not restrict the duty of the League of Nations to take whatever action may be deemed wise and effectual to safeguard the peace of the world;

Referring to the resolution of the Council of the League of Nations of the 17th April 1935, regarding the course to be adopted by the members of the League of Nations in the event of the unilateral repudiation of undertakings concerning the security of peoples and the maintenance of peace in Europe;

Decide—

(1) To notify the Council of the League of Nations, under Article 11 of the Covenant, of the unilateral action taken by Germany, action which appears a danger for European security and a threat to peace;

(2) Consequently to propose the annexed resolutions to the Council of the League of Nations, it being understood

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that the German Government would be entitled to present its observations on the subject.

DRAFT RESOLUTION TO BE PRESENTED TO THE COUNCIL OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

I. The Council:

Recalling that it has itself on several occasions recognised, as has also the Assembly, the importance of the Treaties of Locarno from the point of view of the maintenance of peace and security.

Considering that:

(1) Scrupulous respect for all treaty obligations is a fundamental principle of international life and an essential condition of the maintenance of peace;

(2) It is an essential principle of the law of nations that no Power can liberate itself from the engagements of a Treaty nor modify the stipulations thereof unless with the consent of the other contracting parties;

(3) The breach of Article 43 of the Treaty of Versailles and the unilateral action taken by the German Government in violation of the Treaty of Locarno without recourse to the procedure laid down by the Treaty of Locarno for the settlement of disputes, conflicts with these principles;

Considers that:

(1) By this unilateral action the German Government confers upon itself no legal rights:

(2) This unilateral action, by introducing a new disturbing element into the international situation, must necessarily appear to be a threat to European security.

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Entrusts a committee composed of.....with the task of making proposals to it with regard to the practical measures to be recommended to the members of the League of Nations.

II. Considering:

That the German Government has claimed that the Franco-Soviet Pact of Mutual Assistance is incompatible with the Treaty of Locarno, and that in consequence of this incompatibility that Government was justified, not only in denouncing the said Treaty, but also in introducing its troops into the demilitarized zone,

That there thus arises a juridical question which might be usefully taken before the Permanent Court of International Justice if the interested Powers were to declare themselves ready to comply with the decision of the Court, as the French Government for its part has already agreed to do,

The Council:

Invites the German Government to notify the Permanent Court of International Justice of the question thus defined and in the conditions indicated above, and to request it to give its decision as soon as possible, it being understood that the parties will at once comply with the ruling of the Court.

III. Considering:

That the unilateral action of Germany has necessarily appeared to be a threat to European peace, and that in consequence it ought, without prejudice to the application of Articles I and IV of the Locarno Treaty, to bring about on the part of the members of the League of Nations, by application of, and in accordance with the terms of Article 11

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of the Covenant, the adoption of any action that may be deemed wise and effectual to safeguard the peace of nations;

The Council takes note:

(1) Of the declaration drawn up in the name of Belgium, France, the United Kingdom and Italy, as regards the maintenance in force for those Powers of the rights and obligations resulting from the Treaty of Locarno;

(2) Of the communications made to it by the Governments of Belgium, France, the United Kingdom and Italy on the subject of the measures contemplated in respect of the situation created by the violation of the zone defined in Article 42 of the Treaty of Versailles.

Letters to be addressed by the Representatives of the United Kingdom and Italy to the Representatives of Belgium and France.

At the moment when the representatives of Belgium, France, Great Britain and Italy have just decided, as provided in today's arrangement, the common line of conduct of their respective Governments, I am authorised to give you the official assurance that, if the effort of conciliation attempted in the said arrangement should fail, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom/the Italian Government:

1.—(a) Will at once consider, in consultation with your Government and the French/Belgian Government, the steps to be taken to meet the new situation thus created;

(b) Will immediately come to the assistance of your Government, in accordance with the Treaty of Locarno, in re-

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spect of any measures which shall be jointly decided upon;

(c) Will, in return for reciprocal assurances from your Government, take, in consultation with your Government, all practical measures available to His Majesty's Government for the purpose of ensuring the security of your country against unprovoked aggression:

(d) Will, for this purpose, establish or continue the contact between the General Staffs of our two countries contemplated in paragraph III (2) of the said arrangement;

2. And furthermore, will subsequently endeavour at the Council of the League of Nations to secure the formulation by the latter of all useful recommendations for the maintenance of peace and the respect for international law.

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